The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

Rev. Joseph J. Baierl C. T. T.

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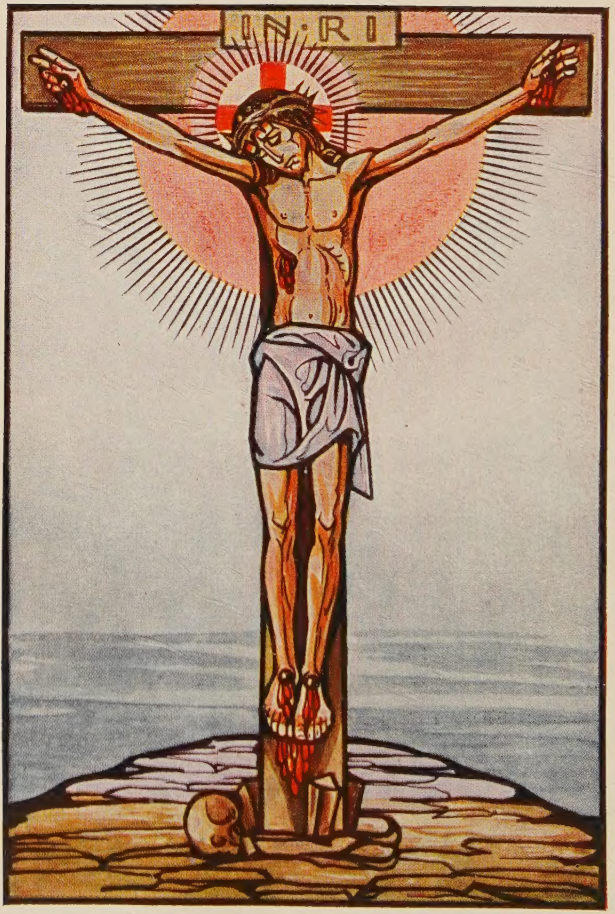
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THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

EXPLAINED IN THE FORM OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

BY

REV. JOSEPH J. BAIERL S. T. D.

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PREFACE.

For the eighth time this booklet issues from the press to greet old and to seek new friends!

The average catechist wishing to explain the great central act of Catholic worship, in its doctrinal and liturgical aspects, feels the need of a systematic treatise that contains the chief truths which every well informed Catholic child ought to know. For practical use among the little ones copious references and the many qualifications necessarily connected with a scientific exposition must be studiously avoided. Only the bare outlines may be drawn. The practical catechist also knows that sound pedagogy requires the grouping into question and answer form of the main points, which the children are to commit to memory.

This little volume modestly aims at supplying this help both to the catechist and to the children. It is designed to serve as a manual for school

children beginning with the fourth or fifth grade. It is hoped that catechists will also find this booklet helpful for the instruction of converts. By judicious arrangement all, or at least the most important, of the eighty-three answers can be easily mastered by the children in the course of three years.

We suggest the following schedule: For the ***fourth*** (or fifth) grade: First term, Part. I, Questions 1—14. Second term, Review. Part II, Questions 1—12. For the ***fifth*** (or sixth) grade: First term, Review. Part I, Questions 15—25. Second term, Review. Part II, Questions 13—37. For the ***sixth*** (or seventh) grade: First term, Review. Part III. Second term, Review. Part IV. To illustrate the Parts and Prayers of Holy Mass the practical catechist will make use of the ***Missal*** in English, which can now be procured at a very reasonable price. He might loan copies of the Missal to the pupils, so that they may follow the priest step by step during Holy Mass. Our ***„Colored Mass Charts"*** also offer aid in this regard.

The text is the same as that of the seventh edition, except for the reference to the most recent

Prefaces. The illustrations, for the most part entirely new, were drawn by the German artist, Mr. Sommers. Their beautiful coloring ought to appeal to the children's esthetic sense.

May the blessing of the Divine Teacher accompany this booklet on its missionary journey to enlighten the minds and to warm the hearts of His children with an intelligent love for the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass!

Joseph J. Baierl.

St. Bernard's Seminary,
Feast of Corpus Christi, 1929.

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PART I.

CHAPTER I.

SACRIFICE IN GENERAL.

Nearly five hundred years ago a certain holy man wrote a book called *The Imitation of Christ* in which he says: "When a priest celebrates the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, he honors God, he gives joy to the angels, he edifies the Church, he helps the living, he obtains rest for the dead and he makes himself partaker of all that is good." (B. iv. chap. v.). What this pious Catholic believed the faithful children of Christ's Church have always believed. Indeed nothing pleases God more and brings richer blessings upon us than the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass.

Every true Catholic ought, therefore, to know as much as possible about Holy Mass. Study carefully the answers to the following questions and you, too, will understand what the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is. In the first place, notice the word "sacrifice."

Question I. **What is a sacrifice?**

St. Augustine, a learned and holy bishop in Christ's Church, wrote these beautiful words: "O God! Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are not at rest till they rest in Thee." Without God our lives are after all miserable failures. We all belong to Him, body and soul, because He made us out of nothing. He is our Lord and Master. Therefore we must obey Him as faithful servants. He is also our Father. Consequently we must love Him as devoted children. However, we know that we have all been unfaithful servants and disobedient children of God through original sin and our many actual sins. We deserve to be punished for our wicked conduct towards our heavenly King and Father. God wants us to tell Him that we are sorry for our sins; that we love Him with our whole heart; that we are ready to satisfy Him for our sins and that we wish to serve Him faithfully with body and soul. In one word, **God wants us to practise our holy religion.** This means that we must honor and adore God (1) *interiorly* or with our souls and (2) ***exteriorly*** or with our bodies. We do this by faith, hope, love, devout prayer and sacrifice; by going to church, praying aloud, singing, bending the knee, folding the hands, etc. All these actions are different ways of practising our religion.

Now if some one were to ask which of all these acts of religion is the most perfect; what can we do to honor God most of all with body and soul

at the same time, we should have to answer: "We can honor God most of all by offering **sacrifice** to Him." The other acts by which we worship God may also, to a certain extent, be used to honor the saints; whereas sacrifice may be offered to God alone.

First point. Sacrifice is the most perfect act of religion.

Let us study this most perfect act of religion a little more closely. The story of Cain and Abel, two children of our first parents, Adam and Eve, will help us to understand what is meant by a sacrifice. (See picture, page 11.)

Cain was a farmer and Abel a shepherd. God blessed them both, so that the earth brought forth a rich harvest and the flocks of sheep were the finest that one could wish for. Desiring to thank God for His goodness, Cain took some of the first fruits of the season and building a fire on a large stone in the field, laid the fruits on the fire and offered them to God. Abel chose one of the youngest lambs of the flock and having killed it poured the blood upon the ground. Then placing the lamb upon a fire which he had built on a stone nearby, he offered the lamb to God. While these offerings were being burned, Cain and Abel were on their knees praying to God. Abel said: "O God! I thank Thee for all Thy goodness to me. All that I have belongs to Thee. Do not look upon my sins. Look kindly upon this offering. I give Thee my best lamb. Kindly accept it from me." God, who knew the

secrets of their hearts, looked with favor upon the gift of Abel, because he was good, but He was displeased with the offering of wicked Cain.

Now, in this story, we notice the following things:

1) The large stone upon which the fruits and lamb were laid while they were being offered to God. This is called the **altar.**

2) The fruits and the lamb which were offered to God on the altar. They are called the **offerings** or the **victims.** These offerings must be things that can be seen (visible objects).

3) Cain and Abel were the persons who offered the gifts to God. They are called the **priests.**

4) While the offerings were burning on the altar, Cain and Abel were on their knees praying to God. Sacrifice may be **offered to God alone.**

5) There is one thing in the picture, however, which cannot be seen. It is the heart of Cain and Abel. If you could look into the heart of Abel, you would see how it was filled with love and obedience to God. This is what Abel said to God: "My God! All that I have is Thine. This lamb, too, belongs to Thee; for Thou art my Lord and Master and Thou hast given me all. I, too, belong to Thee body and soul. I adore and thank Thee with my whole heart." Abel offered the sacrifice in order **to acknowledge that God is the Lord of all things.**

These five things are to be found in every sacrifice.

Second point. A sacrifice is the offering of a visible object by a priest on an altar to God alone, to acknowledge that He is Lord of all things. We can now tell what is meant by a sacrifice.

Answer to Question I. **A sacrifice is the most perfect act of religion and consists in the offering of a visible object by a priest to God alone, in order to acknowledge that He is Lord of all things.**

To offer a sacrifice means to honor someone as God. It would be a most grievous crime (idolatry) to offer sacrifice to anyone except to Almighty God. For by offering sacrifice we show outwardly that we belong entirely to God, with body and soul, and that we depend upon Him for our life and all that we have.

Question II. **What is the most important thing in a sacrifice?**

Recall the sacrifice of Abel. Looking upon the flock of sheep before him Abel thought of how good God had been to him. "My God!" he said, "All that I have comes from Thee. I, too, belong to Thee, body and soul. Thou art all. I am nothing. Behold all that I have and all that I am, I lay at Thy feet." In his mind and heart Abel offered himself and whatever he possessed to the Lord of heaven and earth.

But Abel was not satisfied with this **interior offering.** He wished to show also **outwardly** or by signs the offering, which he was making in his heart. Therefore he chose a lamb to represent himself. Having killed it, he sprinkled its blood upon

the ground and then burned its body upon the altar. In this way he offered sacrifice to God.

You will notice, therefore, that there are very many things connected with a sacrifice. For instance, the altar, the visible offering, the priest, the many different ceremonies, for example, the killing of the animal, the pouring out of its blood, the burning of the gifts, and as we shall see later on, in certain sacrifices also the eating of parts of the offering. We can compare all these outward or visible things with our body. But we know that the body is not the principal part of us. The soul is the chief part of every man, for the soul keeps the body alive and enables it to act in many different ways. Now what is the soul or the principal part of a sacrifice? To find the soul of a sacrifice you must look into the **heart and mind** of the person who makes the offering to God.

Answer to Question II. **The most important thing in a sacrifice is not the outward offering and the many ceremonies that go with it, but rather the interior offering of the heart by which a person gives himself body and soul over to God, in order to honor Him as the Lord of all and to become closely united to Him.**

It does not matter so much, therefore, what the visible offering or gift is which we make to God; neither does it matter much how or in what manner we give it over to God, whether it be by burning the gift or pouring it out or in any other

way. All this outward ceremony can change and take place in different ways. But the interior offering of the heart, by which a man gives himself body and soul over to God, in order to honor Him as Lord of all things, must be present in every sacrifice. Without this interior offering of the heart to God no sacrifice is pleasing to Him. It is like a dead body.

Question III. **Why is sacrifice offered to God?**

By offering sacrifice to God 1) we **adore** and **honor** Him as the Lord of all creation. Abraham honored God in this way when he placed his son Isaac upon the altar to offer him as a sacrifice to the Lord. An angel touched Abraham's hand as he was about to strike with the knife and told him not to harm the boy, but to offer a ram instead. (Sacrifice of Adoration.) 2) We **thank** God for His goodness to us. When Noe came out of the ark he built an altar and offered the sacrifice of an animal to God, in order to thank God for having saved him and his family from the deluge. (Sacrifice of Thanksgiving.) 3) We **beg His pardon** for our sins and ask Him not to punish us. At one time God punished the Jews for their sins by allowing their enemies, the Philistines, to kill thirty thousand Israelites in battle. The prophet, Samuel, showed the people the greatness of their sins. They did penance and the prophet Samuel offered the sacrifice of a young lamb. The Lord heard their prayers and pardoned their sins. (Sacrifice of Propitiation.) 4) We **ask His help** and pray for blessings

of soul and body. We read in the Holy Bible that on account of the wickedness of the Jews God did not allow rain to fall in all Israel for three years and a half. The prophet Elias offered the sacrifice of a bullock and begged God to send the rain. The Lord answered the prayer of Elias. (Sacrifice of Petition.)

Answer to Question III. **Sacrifice is offered to God 1) to adore and honor Him as the Lord of all things; 2) to thank Him for His goodness to us; 3) to beg His pardon for sin; 4) to ask His help for body and soul.**

Question IV. **How many kinds of sacrifice are there?**

If you look at the gifts which were offered to God, you will see that the people generally gave over to God as sacrifice offerings, which they owned and used as food and drink and which were, therefore, very closely united to their life. They were of two kinds: 1) Certain objects were offered to God that had no blood in them, as for instance, fruits, bread, oil, wine, incense, etc. They were called **unbloody** sacrifices. 2) Offerings were made to God that had blood in them. They were animals such as sheep, goats, oxen, birds, etc. These formed the **bloody** sacrifices. They were more common than the unbloody sacrifices and were used especially to satisfy God for sin.

Answer to Question IV. **There are two kinds of sacrifice: bloody and unbloody sacrifices.**

Question V. **Was sacrifice offered to God from the earliest times?**

Sacrifice was offered to God from the very earliest times. You remember the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, of the patriarchs, Abraham and Noe, of the king and priest, Melchisedech, etc. The heathens, too, offered sacrifices of animals, fruits, oil, wine, milk, cakes, honey, incense, etc., to their false gods. In Mexico a certain tribe of Indians sacrificed their enemies whom they captured in war to the sun god. In Canaan the heathens were guilty of the most disgusting idolatry, for they offered even little children to the cruel idol Moloch.

In the beginning, it seems, God did not prescribe in particular just how the people were to offer sacrifice to Him nor who were to be His priests. Generally it was the head of the family or the patriarch of the tribe who exercised the office of priest. However, after God had led the Israelites out of Egypt into the desert, while on their way to the promised land, the Lord called Moses aside and told him in detail how He wanted the Jews to offer sacrifice. He commanded Moses to anoint his brother, Aaron, **High Priest.** At the same time God made the sons of Aaron and their descendants His **priests.** The men of the tribe of Levi were chosen to be **levites** or servants of the temple. God also told Moses about the vestments of the priests, the altar, the offerings, the time of the sacrifices, etc. Certain animals (sheep, oxen, goats, doves) were to be offered

as bloody sacrifices, whereas unleavened bread, wine, cakes, oil and incense were to be offered as unbloody sacrifices. (See picture, p. 46.)

The Jewish sacrifices were offered to God with great ceremony. Thus when a Jew wished to offer the sacrifice of a lamb, for instance, he brought the animal to the gate of the tabernacle or temple, where he or the levites killed the animal. The blood was then carried into the sanctuary to the priest who poured it out or sprinkled it on the altar. Certain parts of the animal were burned on the altar. Sometimes, before killing the animal, the person who made the offering would lay his hands on the head of the animal as a sign that he wished to place his sins on the animal. In certain sacrifices the whole offering was burned (holocaust). In others only a part was burned and the rest was eaten by the priests. Finally at other times one part was burned on the altar, one portion was eaten by the priests and a third part was eaten by the person who made the offering. **This ceremony of eating parts of the offering** was a sign that the priests and people wished to be united as closely at possible to God; to become His friends by sitting at His table, at is were, and eating of His gifts. This ceremony is called **Communion.** The Christian Religion, too, has its sacrifice and Communion.

Answer to Question V. **Sacrifice was offered to God from very earliest times and nearly every religion, whether true or false, makes use of sacrifice.**

CHAPTER II.

THE GREAT SACRIFICE OF JESUS CHRIST.

Question VI. **Did the sacrifices of the Old Testament please God perfectly?**

God was pleased with many of the sacrifices that were offered to Him in the Old Testament and bestowed great blessings upon the people who made the offerings. Such were, for example, the sacrifices offered by Abel, Noe, Abraham, Melchisedech and the prophets. He was, however, displeased with certain other offerings because "the priests and people honored God with their lips only and their hearts were far from Him." (Isaias 29 : 13.) They offered to the Lord some visible gift and performed certain empty ceremonies. The principal part of the sacrifice, however, was wanting, namely, the interior offering of the heart to God.

None of the sacrifices of the Old Testament, not even the best, pleased God perfectly and honored Him as He deserved to be honored. There were two reasons for this. 1) The offerings or gifts were not worthy of the Almighty. Even though the people were to offer the very best and the richest things they had and to repeat these sacrifices day after day, it would be like offering a penny to a king. Moreover, the bloody sacrifices could never of themselves wash away sin. 2) The priests and people had

sins upon their souls. Consequently they could never please God perfectly with their sacrifices.

Answer to Question VI. **The sacrifices of the Old Testament did not please God perfectly 1) because the offerings or gifts were not worthy of God Almighty and could never of themselves take away sin and 2) because the priests and people had sin upon their souls.**

Question VII. **Did God leave the world without a sacrifice and a priest worthy of Himself?**

After the sin of our first parents nowhere in all the world was it possible to find a sacrifice truly worthy of the Almighty and a priest who was entirely free from sin. But God did not leave the world with imperfect sacrifices and unworthy priests. In His mercy and goodness the Lord sent us from heaven itself a great High Priest to offer to the Almighty in our name a sacrifice, which alone was worthy of our heavenly King and which could satisfy Him perfectly for the sins of the whole world.

Answer to Question VII. **God did not leave the world without a sacrifice and a priest worthy of Himself: He sent us from heaven itself a High Priest Who is without sin to offer a sacrifice truly worthy of the Almighty.**

Question VIII. **Who was this High Priest and what sacrifice did He offer?**

God the Father sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the most Blessed

Trinity, into this world, to offer sacrifice for our sakes. Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary several thousands of years after the sin of Adam and Eve. This High Priest did not offer the sacrifice of an animal or some other gift from this world. The offering, that He made to His heavenly Father, was the Sacrifice of His own pure Soul and sacred Body.

Answer to Question VIII. **This High Priest is Jesus Christ, God and Man, who offered Himself as a Sacrifice most worthy of God Almighty and the most perfect the world has ever seen.**

Question IX. **Why did Jesus Christ offer Himself as a Sacrifice to God?**

The answer to question III tells us that sacrifice is offered to God for four reasons. Now Christ made the Sacrifice of Himself to His heavenly Father for our sakes, as we have already mentioned. By this Sacrifice therefore, He adored and honored God, thanked Him, begged His pardon and satisfied Him for all sin and asked Him to give us every blessing. All this He did in the most perfect manner possible, for Christ is God and Man. The sacrifices of the Old Testament were shadows or pictures which had to give way before the great Sacrifice of Christ, just as shadows flee before the rising sun. Jesus Christ offering Himself to God for our sakes -this is the great Sacrifice of the New Testament, the most perfect and pleasing act of religion that can possibly be made to the Lord of heaven and earth.

Answer to Question IX. **Jesus Christ offered Himself as a Sacrifice to God 1) to adore and honor God most perfectly as the Lord of all; 2) to thank him perfectly for His goodness to us; 3) to beg His pardon most perfectly for our sins and 4) to ask Him to give us every blessing of soul and body.**

CHAPTER III.

WHEN AND HOW DID JESUS CHRIST OFFER THIS GREAT SACRIFICE TO GOD?

Question X. **When did Jesus Christ offer this great Sacrifice of Himself to God?**

From the very first moment that He became Man the great High Priest, Jesus Christ, began to offer the Sacrifice of Himself to God. He continued it all during His life on earth until His death on Mount Calvary. He still offers that same Sacrifice in His Church in the Holy Eucharist. He will continue to offer Himself forever, because according to the words of the prophet Christ is "a priest forever." (Ps. CIX. 4.)

Now this ***interior*** offering which Christ makes in His Sacred Heart, by which He gives Himself Body and Soul over to God Almighty, He showed ***outwardly***, too, all during His life on earth in many different ways. But it was especially during the last two days of His earthly life that He showed outwardly or by signs this Sacrifice

of Himself to God. He did this on Holy Thursday and Good Friday—at the Last Supper and on the Cross.

Answer to Question X. **Jesus Christ offered this Sacrifice of Himself to God 1) at the Last Supper on the eve of His death and 2) on the Cross of Mount Calvary on Good Friday.**

Question XI. **How did Jesus Christ offer Himself to God?**

a) **At the Last Supper.** (See picture, p. 24.) Let us look at the picture of Christ sitting at the Last Supper table with His twelve apostles. It was Holy Thursday night. When the supper was finished Christ took bread into His sacred hands and with His eyes lifted toward heaven, to God, His Almighty Father, giving thanks, He blessed, broke and gave it to His disciples, saying: "Take and eat ye all of this * * * FOR THIS IS MY BODY." In like manner taking the chalice of wine into His hands and giving thanks, He blessed and gave it to His disciples saying: "Take and drink ye all of this * * * FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL TESTAMENT (THE MYSTERY OF FAITH) WHICH SHALL BE SHED FOR YOU AND FOR MANY UNTO THE REMISSION OF SINS."

These are the words of Consecration. When Christ spoke them He Himself became present under the appearances of bread and wine. The

same Jesus Christ was there present, hidden under the forms of bread and wine with His Sacred Body and Precious Blood, Soul and Divinity, alive and glorious, Who for thirty-three years had dwelt amongst us. *In His Sacred Heart* He offered Himself Body and Soul to God for our sakes. He showed this offering ***outwardly***, too, because He offered Himself under the separate forms of bread and wine. In the chalice was contained His Precious Blood and on the plate lay His Sacred Body. It seemed as though His Blood had separated or flowed from His Body and He appeared as dead. Thus Christ offered Himself to God under the separate forms of bread and wine; that is to say, in an **unbloody manner.** (This was the first Mass.)

First point. Jesus Christ offered Himself to God in an unbloody manner under the forms of bread and wine.

b) **On the Cross.** (See picture, p. 2.) Imagine that you are in that great crowd that followed Jesus from the city of Jerusalem to Mount Calvary on the first Good Friday. He allowed His enemies to treat Him as a most wicked criminal. "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter and like a lamb without voice before his shearer so he openeth not his mouth." (Isaias LIII. 7.) The High Priest, Jesus Christ, permitted them to scourge Him, to place a crown of thorns on His head, a cross on His shoulder, to nail Him to the cross and to pierce His Sacred Heart with a lance. The blood flowed from His Adorable Body and He

died for our sakes. *In His Sacred* Heart Jesus offered Himself, Body and Soul, to God for love of us. He showed this offering *outwardly,* too, because He really shed His Blood on the cross. Thus Christ offered Himself to God in a **bloody manner.**

Second point. Jesus Christ offered Himself to God in a bloody manner on the Cross of Calvary.

Answer to Question XI. **Jesus Christ offered Himself to God 1) in an unbloody manner under the separate forms of bread and wine and 2) in a bloody manner by His death on the cross.**

Question XII. **Does Jesus Christ continue to offer Himself to God Almighty?**

Let us look once more at the scene in the Last Supper room in Jerusalem. After Christ had offered Himself to God under the appearances of bread and wine, He said to His apostles these words: "DO THIS IN COMMEMORATION OF ME." That is to say, "I want you to pronounce the words of Consecration: "THIS IS MY BODY * * * THIS IS MY BLOOD." At these words I will become present under the appearances of bread and wine and offer Myself to God anew, just as I did a few moments ago. I make you **priests** with Me. Through you I will continue to offer Myself to God."

The apostles obeyed Christ's command by using the power of the Priesthood which Christ had given to them. They did this in the HOLY MASS. (See picture, p. 26.) They gave the power which they had received from Christ to their successors,

namely, to the bishops and the bishops conferred it upon the priests of Christ's Church through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Thus we see very clearly, that even though Christ died, His Sacrifice still continues and is renewed each day in the Mass. In every country of the world wherever there are Christians gathered together, Christ continues to offer Himself to God through His ministers, the priests.

Answer to Question XII. **Jesus Christ continues to offer Himself to God Almighty in an unbloody manner, that is to say, under the separate forms of bread and wine in the Holy Mass through His visible ministers, the priests of the Catholic Church.**

CHAPTER IV.

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

Question XIII. **Is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass the same as the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross?**

Let us suppose that there are three pictures before us. The first one shows the scene at the Last Supper; the second represents the crucifixion on Mount Calvary and the third has the figure of a priest celebrating Mass. These pictures certainly appear to be very different from one another and yet, they represent the very same thing,—the great Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Let us compare them a little more closely.

a) At the Last Supper the **offering** or **victim** was not bread and wine, but Christ's Body and Blood. On the cross it was Christ's Body and Blood that were offered to God. In the Mass it is Christ's Body and Blood under the forms of bread and wine which are offered to God.

b) The **Priest** at the Last Supper was Christ Himself. On the cross it was Christ Himself who offered His Body and Blood. In the Mass Jesus Christ Himself is the Priest who acts through His visible representative at the altar. Now in a sacrifice the offering and the priest are the chief things. All the rest, namely, the outward ceremonies and the manner of offering, are only secondary or of less importance.

Answer to Question XIII. **The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the very same Sacrifice as Jesus' Sacrifice on the Cross, because the Offering and the Priest are the same * * * Jesus Christ, our Blessed Lord.**

Question XIV. **Is there any difference between the Sacrifice of the Cross and the Mass?**

There is only *one* difference between the Sacrifice of the Cross and that of the Last Supper or the Mass. On the Cross Christ suffered and died. His Blood flowed from His Sacred Body. He offered Himself **in a bloody manner** * * * But at the Last Supper and in every Mass Jesus no longer suffers and dies. He offers Himself under the appearances of bread and wine — **in a unbloody manner** * * * By the words of Consecration His Blood becomes present in the chalice

and His Body on the little golden plate. It seems as if His Blood were separated from His Body. This reminds us of His bloody death on the Cross. But the Offering and the Priest are the same on the Cross, at the Last Supper and in every Mass * * * Jesus Christ, our Blessed Lord. *Only the manner of the offering is different.*

But the manner of offering a sacrifice or the outward way of handing over an offering to God is not the most important thing in a sacrifice. This can take place in different ways. You remember the bloody and unbloody sacrifices of the Old Testament and the many ceremonies connected with them.

Answer to Question XIV. **The difference between the Sacrifice of the Cross and the Mass is in the manner of offering. On the cross Christ really shed His blood and was really slain; in the Mass there is no real shedding of blood nor real death, because Christ can die no more; but the Sacrifice of the Mass, through the separate consecration of the bread and the wine, represents His death on the Cross.**

In one word then, **the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the unbloody Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.** If the Holy Eucharist were a *sacrament* (Holy Communion) merely, **one** appearance would be enough. But the Holy Eucharist is also a *sacrifice*. Therefore the **two** appearances of bread and wine are necessary in the Mass, in order to represent the bloody Sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

CHAPTER V.

THE PERPETUAL SACRIFICE OF THE NEW LAW.

Have you ever heard about the Passion Play? Perhaps you have seen it represented in moving pictures. It is a drama or play of the sufferings and death of Christ, which is given every ten years in a village of Germany called Oberammergau. In our churches the Passion Play, that is to say, the great Sacrifice of Christ is represented anew each day in the Holy Mass. Christ Himself instituted the Mass at the Last Supper. It is to continue until He comes at the end of the world.

Protestants say that Christ offered Himself for us once and for all times on the cross, "for by one oblation (or sacrifice) He hath forever perfected them that are sanctified." (Ep. to the Hebrews, X. 14.) Therefore, they claim that sacrifice is no longer necessary and Catholics are wrong when they talk about the Sacrifice of the Mass. Now we can show very clearly that Christ really gave to His Church a Sacrifice, which He wished to be offered to God as long as His Church should last.

Question XV. **Was all sacrifice to cease with the death of Christ?**

We read about the Sacrifice of the Mass in the Old Testament long before Christ was born into this world. King **David** enlightened by the Holy Ghost prophesied about Christ, the Messias. He said of Him: "Thou art a Priest forever accord-

ing to the order of Melchisedech." (Ps. CIX. 4.) What do these words mean? Melchisedech was a king and a priest of the Most High, who offered to God a sacrifice of bread and wine. Now Christ is a Priest like Melchisedech, because He offers a Sacrifice, His own Body and Blood, under the appearances of bread and wine. He does this in Holy Mass. He will continue to offer this same Sacrifice to the end of time. You see, therefore, that God Himself foretold that there was to be such a perpetual Sacrifice in His Church.

Many hundreds of years passed by. God raised up the last of the prophets of the Old Testament named **Malachias,** who lived about four hundred years before Christ. This prophet condemned the Jewish priests very severely, because they offered to the Lord sacrifices of polluted bread and animals that were blind and sick and lame. Malachias told these priests that God was displeased with them and would no longer receive sacrifices from their hands; that He would send a Priest to take their places and to offer to God an unspotted, unbloody Sacrifice not only in Jerusalem, but "in every place and among all peoples from the rising of the sun to its setting." (Mal. I.) This High Priest is Jesus Christ, the Messias, and this clean Oblation or Sacrifice is His own Body and Blood under the forms of bread and wine, which is offered without end throughout the world in Holy Mass.

Answer to Question XV. **All sacrifice was not to cease with the death of Christ. For in Christ's Church there was to be a perpetual and unbloody**

Sacrifice under the appearances of bread and wine as was foretold by the prophets David and Malachias.

Question XVI. **What is the perpetual Sacrifice of the New Testament?**

The High Priest Jesus Christ offered Himself in a bloody manner on the cross. But this bloody Sacrifice He was to offer only once, for St. Paul says: "Christ having risen from the dead, dieth now no more." (Romans VI. 9.) And yet, the prophets David and Malachias had foretold clearly that the Messias was to offer a perpetual and unbloody Sacrifice. Christ, "the Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech," offers and will continue to offer this same Sacrifice to the end of time in an unbloody manner under the forms of bread and wine in **Holy Mass.**

Answer to Question XVI. **The perpetual Sacrifice of the New Testament is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, for in the Mass Christ offers Himself from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof and in all places as a most pleasing Sacrifice.**

Question XVII. **Who instituted the Sacrifice of the Mass and when was it instituted?**

Now what the prophets had foretold *actually* happened. Before offering Himself in a bloody manner on the cross, Christ offered Himself in an unbloody manner at the Last Supper. Jesus took bread and wine and giving thanks to God blessed these offerings. This was the **Offertory.** Then pronouncing the words of consecration, "This is my Body" — "This is my Blood".

He changed the bread and wine into His Body and Blood and offered Himself to God. This was the **Consecration.** Thereupon He gave His sacred Body and Blood to His Apostles to eat and drink. This was the **Communion.** You see, therefore, the three principal parts of the Holy Mass. It was Christ Himself who instituted the Mass at the Last Supper.

Answer to Question XVII. **It was Jesus Christ Himself who instituted the Sacrifice of the Mass at the Last Supper when He offered Himself to God under the appearances of bread and wine for our sakes.**

Question XVIII. **Does Christ continue to offer Himself in the Mass?**

After having offered Himself in the first Mass, at the Last Supper, Christ said to His Apostles: "Do this in commemoration of Me" (St. Luke XXII, 19). That is to say: "What I have just done, you do in like manner. I make you **priests** with Me." The Apostles obeyed Christ's command to offer the unbloody Sacrifice of His Body and Blood. They did this each day in Holy Mass. The faithful received Holy Communion at the Mass.

After Christ's Ascension into heaven the Apostles went as missionaries into foreign countries to preach the gospel, to baptize and to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. But they could not be everywhere and neither were they to live to the end of the world. And yet, Holy Mass was to continue to the end of time. The great Apostle, St. Paul, tells us that: "For as often as you shall

eat of this bread and drink of this chalice, you shall announce the death of the Lord, **until He come"** (I Cor. XI, 26). How then did the Apostles provide for this?

They ordained worthy men to be bishops and priests, so that they might continue the work of Christ. These priests offered Holy Mass as the Apostles had commanded them. The Church continued to grow more and more, so that today it is found in all parts of the world. Hundreds of thousands of Masses are being offered up to God each day. In all countries of the world, "from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof" the clean Oblation of Christ's Body and Blood is offered to God in obedience to Christ's command: "Do this in commemoration of Me."

Answer to Question XVIII. **Christ continues to offer Himself in the Mass through His priests, who, ever since the days of the apostles, have obeyed Christ's command: "Do this in commemoration of Me."**

CHAPTER VI.

WHY DID CHRIST INSTITUTE THE MASS?

Question XIX. **Why did Christ institute the perpetual Sacrifice of the Mass?**

Christ Himself gives us the answer to this question in the words which He spoke to His apostles: **"Do this in commemoration of Me."** What does He want us to remember? He would have us never forget that He sacrificed Himself on the

cross for our sakes. Now Holy Mass keeps this great truth forever in our memories. Without the Mass Catholics would be like Protestants, who read about Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross in the Bible and hear about it now and then in sermons. But at best, this is nothing more than a mere picture, a story of something that has happened over nineteen hundred years ago. Not so with us Catholics. On the altars of the Catholic Church in Holy Mass that wondrous scene—Christ offering Himself for our salvation—is represented day after day, is really and truly renewed without end. In the Mass the living Christ offers Himself forever to God for our sakes.

First point. Christ instituted the Mass, in order to ***represent*** and ***renew*** forever His great Sacrifice of the Cross.

But there is another reason. On the tree of the cross the most precious fruits have grown; from the cross all graces and blessings flow. Now how are we to get these graces and blessings which Christ has earned by the Sacrifice of the Cross? In the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass these ***graces are distributed*** or given out to us. On the cross the fountain of grace has sprung up; in the Mass the little streamlets flow into our souls. You see, therefore, why we need a perpetual sacrifice in the Church. (See picture, p. 26.) That is why the Church commands her children to assist at Mass under pain of mortal sin on all Sundays and Holydays of obligation. To miss Mass through one's own evil will is to exclude oneself from the fountain of

graces; to say to Christ, as it were, I do not need the graces of your Sacrifice.

Second point. Christ instituted the Mass in order to *apply* to our souls continually the fruits of His bloody Sacrifice on the cross.

Answer to Question XIX. **Christ instituted the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass 1) in order to represent and to renew forever His bloody Sacrifice of the Cross and 2) to apply to our souls continually the fruits of His bloody Sacrifice.**

CHAPTER VII.

THE VALUE AND THE EFFECTS OF THE MASS.

Question XX. **What is the value or the power of the Mass?**

The value or the power of a sacrifice depends upon the dignity of the person who offers it and on the worth or price of the offering. The more valuable the offering and the greater the dignity or worth of the priest, the greater is the value and power of the sacrifice. Now, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is worth just as much as the Sacrifice of the Cross, because the Mass is the very same Sacrifice as that of the Cross. Therefore, just as the Sacrifice of the Cross is of infinite worth and power, because the Priest and Victim are Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, so too, the Mass is of **infinite value and power,** because the Priest and Victim are Jesus Christ.

Answer to Question XX. **The value or power of the Mass is infinite just as the Sacrifice of the Cross is of infinite value, because in the Mass the Priest and the Victim are the same Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Let us now study more in detail the effects of the Mass 1) as regards *God* and 2) as regards *ourselves.*

Question XXI. **Why do we offer the Mass to God?**

The Sacrifice of the Mass is the very same Sacrifice as that of Christ on the Cross. In the answer to question IX we learned that Jesus offered Himself on the cross as a most perfect Sacrifice of adoration and praise, of thanksgiving, of satisfaction and petition. Therefore in the Mass Jesus offers Himself 1) **to adore and praise** God in the most perfect manner. At night the heavens glitter and sparkle with countless stars, which seem to call out to God "Glory be to God in the highest!" But when the sun rises in the morning, all the little stars grow pale and disappear before the dazzling light of the sun. The angels and saints shine like the stars before the throne of God. But when Jesus, the heavenly sun, rises in the Consecration of the Mass, when His Sacred Heart adores and praises God, the praise of the angels and saints is as nothing. To pray the rosary or the stations of the cross honors God, but nothing that we can do of ourselves or with others can ever honor and praise God as much as the Mass;

because in the Mass Jesus Himself praises and honors God with us.

2) Christ offers Himself in the Mass **to thank** God in the most perfect manner for all His goodness to us. All that we have comes from God, and try as much as we may, of ourselves, we can never thank Him sufficiently. Even though the Blessed Virgin Mary were to thank God in our name, it would be little as compared with what we owe Him. But in the Mass Jesus Himself thanks God for us and with us. He says: "Father, I thank Thee for all the good of body and soul that Thou hast given to My brothers and sisters. Accept Me as a Sacrifice of thanks." Do you now understand why the Mass is the very best means of thanking God for all His goodness to us?

3) Christ offers Himself in the Mass **to beg God's pardon and to satisfy Him** for all our sins. A ship loaded with passengers was on the great ocean. A terrible storm arose and all believed that their last hour had come. When the danger was at its highest, the captain took a little child into his arms and raising it towards heaven cried out: "O God, look down upon this innocent child and have mercy on us!" God heard his prayer. The storm ceased and all were saved. In the Mass during the elevation the priest holds up the Infant Jesus as if to say: "O God, spare us for the sake of Thy Son." Jesus Himself cries out as He did on the cross: "Father, forgive them! For the sake of My Precious Blood have mercy on them."

We can satisfy God for our sins by our prayers and good works. But all our prayers and good works are as nothing when compared with the Mass. This does not mean that the Mass takes away our mortal sins. The Mass obtains grace for the sinner to feel sorry for his sins, to confess them and to amend his life. Moreover, just as wax melts in the fire, so venial sins and the punishment due to our sins are taken away when we assist devoutly at Holy Mass.

4) Christ offers Himself in the Mass **to ask God to give us the graces** we need for soul and body. We depend on God absolutely every moment of our lives. We must turn to Him for these blessings, because as St. James says: "Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights;" and Christ Himself tells us: "without Me you can do nothing." Now in the Mass we do not pray alone, for Christ Himself on the altar prays to God for us and with us. He shows to the Father the wounds of His Body and the sufferings of His Soul and says: "Father, see what I have done for love of these Christians. For the sake of these wounds give them whatever they ask for." Do you think the Father will refuse His Son anything that Jesus asks Him to give us?

Answer to Question XXI. **We offer the Mass to God 1) in order to adore and praise Him in the most perfect manner possible as the Lord of all creation; 2) to thank Him most perfectly for all the graces and benefits received from Him; 3) to**

beg His pardon and to satisfy Him in the most perfect manner for all our sins; 4) to ask His help in all our needs of body and soul.

Question XXII. **May the Mass be offered to anyone except to God alone?**

The answer to question I. tells us that sacrifice may be offered to God alone. To offer sacrifice means to adore someone as God; to say "Thou are the Greatest, the Holiest." Now in the Mass a true sacrifice is offered to God. Therefore the Mass may be offered to God alone. It would be idolatry to offer the Mass to any one except to God alone. However, in the Mass we may also honor the memory of God's special friends, the saints of heaven.

Answer to Question XXII. **The Mass may be offered to God alone; but in the Mass we may also honor the memory of the saints.**

Question XXIII. **How do we honor the saints in the Mass?**

The Mass itself is offered to God alone, although at times it is celebrated in honor of some saint. That is to say, in the Mass we think of the saint whom we wish to honor and thank God through Jesus Christ, because He has made the saint what he is. We beg the saint to pray to God for us, so that we too some day may become saints in heaven. Such a Mass is nothing else except a sacrifice of praise and petition to God and at the same time it is showing honor and veneration to the saint. God is pleased if we remember His

friends, the saints of heaven, and they will surely intercede with God for us.

Answer to Question XXIII. **We honor the memory of the saints in the Mass 1) by thanking God for the grace and glory He has bestowed on them and 2) by asking their intercession for us.**

We have been considering the effects of the Mass in regard to God. Let us now see what effects the Mass has *for each one of us;* in other words, we shall ask a few questions about the **fruits** of the Mass.

Question XXIV. **To whom are the fruits of the Mass applied?**

In the Mass the priest prays first of all for the whole Church. Before the Consecration he makes what is called "the Memento of the Living" and after the Consecration "the Memento of the Dead". Just as Jesus Christ offered Himself on the cross for all mankind, but especially for those who would become members of His Church, so the priest in Christ's name offers the Mass **for all the members of Christ's Church,** both the living and the dead. Every Mass is like the sun which pours forth its light and warmth over the whole earth, bringing grace to the hearts of all Christians. (See picture, p. 26.)

But just as the sun does not shine with the same power everywhere, so, too, the Mass does not bring the same grace to all Christians. Some receive more fruits from the Mass than others. In the first place, the **priest who celebrates the Mass** receives most fruits, because he is nearest

the fountain of grace, which is Christ Jesus on the altar. The priest has a great dignity, but at the same time great responsibilities or duties. Therefore he needs most graces.

Who comes immediately after the priest? At the Memento the priest mentions some names in particular. **Whoever asks the priest to offer the Mass for his special intention** receives after the priest special graces in the Mass. Finally, **all who are present at the Mass** obtain rich graces; that is to say, they who serve the Mass and all who join with the priest in offering the Mass. We are not to be mere spectators. Every Christian is, in a certain sense, a priest according to the words of St. Peter: "You are a kingly priesthood." (I St. Peter, 2, 9.) What a great dignity! Think of it when you are present at Mass and join with the priest in offering up the Holy Sacrifice.

They who are not members of the Church do not share in the fruits of the Mass, although the Mass may be offered for their conversion. Neither do the damned in hell nor they who die without Baptism receive any of the fruits of the Mass, for they would not be helped thereby.

Answer to Question XXIV. **The fruits of the Mass are applied in general to the whole Church, both the living and the dead. They are applied in particular 1) to the priest who celebrates the Mass; 2) to those for whom he specially offers it and 3) to all those who devoutly assist at the Mass.**

The fruits of the Mass are infinite and can never be used up. It does not matter, therefore, how

often the Mass is offered nor to how many its fruits are applied. Neither does it depend upon the numbers who are present at the Mass, for each one receives as much of the fruits of the Mass as if he were present alone. But a great deal does depend upon each one's **devotion** during the Mass.

If the Mass is offered for several persons, does each one receive as much of the fruits as he would receive if the Mass were offered for one person only? — It seems that according to the will of Christ when the Mass is offered for several persons the fruits are divided among them, so that they do not receive as much as they would receive if the Mass were offered for each one alone. Just how much of the fruits each one receives from the Mass is hidden from us and depends upon our devotion and the goodness of God.

Question XXV. **When speaking of the Mass is it right to ask: How much does the Mass cost?**

Many persons who are not Catholics think that Catholics buy the Mass, because they pay a certain amount of money to the priest in order **to have the Mass read according to their special intention.** Many Catholics, too, when asking the priest to say a Mass for their intention inquire: How much does it cost? Now this is wrong, for the Mass is the most sacred thing in Christ's religion and can never be bought for money. The priest who reads the Mass, however, has a right to receive something in return for his work. St. Paul says: "They that serve the altar, partake with the altar." (I

Cor. IX. 13.) From the earliest times the people used to bring offerings of bread and wine together with other articles of food for the support of the clergy and the poor. The Mass was offered especially for those who brought the offerings. Gradually, however, instead of offering food the faithful gave money and asked the priest to offer the Mass for their special intention. This custom began to be quite common from the seventh century. This offering is called **"stipend"** or alms and is simply an offering made for the support of the priest and is not at all a payment for the Mass.

Answer to Question XXV. **It is wrong to ask: How much does the Mass cost, because the Mass cannot be bought for money. We should say: What is the offering for the Mass?**

CONSIDERATION.

Think of the hundreds of thousands of Masses that are offered up to God each day! You have a share in each one of these. What a great blessing to be a child of the Catholic Church! Resolve to be present at Mass as often as possible or at least each morning make the following good resolution: "I wish to share in all the Masses that are offered up today throughout the whole world." Do this and God's grace will descend upon you like the warm rain and sunshine that give promise of a harvest of richest blessings.

To assist at Mass means to stand beneath the Cross of Calvary. But remember that there were good and bad people there on the first Good Fri-

day. To the good and pious Christ's Sacrifice brought many blessings and graces; the wicked, however, received nothing. So it is with the Mass. Be always devout and reverent during the Adorable Sacrifice. Imitate Christ's Blessed Mother and the other holy women at the foot of the cross and Christ's Precious Blood will flow into your hearts to purify them more and more and to make them beautiful and holy for heaven.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHURCH.

There are very many things that are connected with the offering up of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and every Catholic ought to know at least the most important of these things. They are contained briefly in the answers to the following questions.

Question I. **What is the church?**

We Catholics believe that Almighty God is in all places and that we can adore Him no matter where we happen to be. But we know, too, that from the very earliest times the people used to gather together in some sacred place at stated periods, in order to worship God publicly or in common. Here, too, the sacrifice was offered up to God. This place is called the church.

Answer to Question I. **The church is a sacred place where the people gather together to worship God and where the sacrifice is offered to Him.**

1. The patriarchs used the open fields as their churches.

2. The pagans made use of the sacred groves, the fields and beautiful buildings of stone and marble as temples.

3. The Jews, under the leadership of Moses, employed a large tent called "The Tabernacle" as their church. During the forty years in the desert the Jews gathered for divine worship in the Tabernacle, which was built in such a way that it could be moved from place to place. When they arrived in the promised land they built a temple of stone. The most beautiful Jewish temple was the great temple of Jerusalem, which was built by King Salomon after seven years of hard labor.

4. Christ foretold that this temple was not to last long, because He had come to found a new temple—the Christian Church. The temple of Jerusalem was destroyed by fire and a short time before this event, fire also destroyed the great pagan temple in the city of Rome. The Jewish temple and the pagan temple were to give way to the church which was to last to the end of the world—the Catholic Church.

Question II. **Where did the Christians hold divine worship in the early ages?**

The first Christians gathered together in private houses to worship God and to offer up the Holy

Sacrifice of the Mass. When the persecutions against them increased to such an extent that it was no longer safe to meet in private houses, they used secret caves, the woods, the prisons, and especially the Catacombs. These were long underground passages many of which can be seen

even yet, particularly around the city of Rome. The Catacombs were also the burying grounds of the early Christians. (See picture above.)

Answer to Question II. **In the early ages the Christians held divine worship in private houses and during the persecutions in secret caves, in the woods, in prisons and especially in the Catacombs.**

Question III. **When did the Christians begin to build churches?**

After the persecutions had ceased under the emperor Constantine the Great, beginning with the year 313, the Christians were allowed to come forth from their hiding places into the open. They changed the pagan temples into Christian churches and began to erect beautiful buildings in all parts of the world where the faithful gathered to offer to God the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Many of the Christian churches are worthy to be classed among the most beautiful buildings in the world.

Answer to Question III. **After the persecutions had ceased the Christians began to build beautiful churches and to change the pagan temples into Christian churches.**

Question IV. **Are the Christian churches dedicated to God's service by special ceremony?**

The Christian churches are most sacred places, because there the great Sacrifice is offered anew and Christ Himself dwells night and day in the Tabernacle. The Christian church is dedicated or handed over to God's service by special prayers and blessings. Some churches are consecrated by the bishop with holy oils and solemn ceremony. A church which is consecrated, and not merely blessed, has twelve crosses inside on its walls with twelve candles, which are lighted each year on the anniversary of the consecration.

Answer to Question IV. **The Christian churches are dedicated to God's service by special prayers and blessings.**

Every church receives a name, (a title), in honor of some mystery of our holy religion or is placed under the patronage of some saint. The most important part of the church is the **Sanctuary,** the place where the altar is. This part is separated from the body or nave of the church by the altar or Communion-rail.

How beautiful, peaceful and devotional are not the Catholic churches where Christ dwells day and night in the Tabernacle surrounded by the invisible choirs of angels waiting for us to pay Him a visit! Let us always remember that the church is the House of God and never dare to misbehave in the Holy of Holies.

CHAPTER II.

THE ALTAR.

The principal part of the church is the place where the sacrifice is laid and whence it is offered to God. This place is called the **Altar.**

1. The patriarchs used a heap of stones or a rude rock of the field as an altar.

2. The pagans had altars of stone or metal. Upon these altars were placed burning coals and the sacrifice was laid on the fire.

3. Moses at God's command told the Jews what kind of altars to build in the tabernacle for the offering of incense and the other sacrifices. These altars, and later on those in the temple of Jerusalem, were made of costly material and decorated with beautiful ornaments.

Question V. **What is the Christian altar?**

The altar upon which was offered the greatest sacrifice that the world has ever seen was "the Altar of the Cross" on Mount Calvary, where Christ offered Himself in a bloody manner for our sins. But we know that Christ wished to represent and to renew this great Sacrifice of Himself "from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof" in all places. Therefore He instituted the unbloody Sacrifice of Himself under the appearances of bread and wine at the Last Supper. Christ Himself offered this Sacrifice on the **table** in the Last Supper room. This table is the Christian altar.

Answer to Question V. **The Christian altar is the table on which the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is offered.**

Question VI. **How many kinds of altars are there?**

The first Christian altars were the ordinary house tables made of wood. They are called **"Table Altars."** During the persecutions the early Christians went underground into the Catacombs, the Christian cemeteries. Here the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered up to God over the graves or tombs of the martyrs. This kind of altar is called **"Tomb Altar."** Table altars are open below like a table, whereas tomb altars are closed below like a tomb. (See picture, p. 47.)

Answer to Question VI. **There are two kinds of altars: Table and Tomb Altars.**

Question VII. **What is the principal part of the altar?**

Altars are constructed in various forms. Some are small and plain, while others are built large with the rear part raised high and beautifully carved and decorated. The principal part of the altar, however, is the flat surface of the table. This table surface or at least the center of the table surface, namely, the part about a foot square and just large enough to allow the base of the chalice and the paten to rest thereon (this part is called the **altar-stone**) must be made of stone or marble. (See picture, p. 47.) Ordinarily Holy Mass may be read only on an altar stone. Some altars are built in such a way, that they remain fixed to the floor and cannot be moved (fixed altars); others are so arranged that the altar stone in the center of the table surface can be lifted out (portable altars). Missionaries often carry the altar stone with them on their journeys.

Answer to Question VII. **The principal part of the altar is the flat stone surface of the table or the altar stone.**

Question VIII. **Is the altar consecrated and what must it contain?**

The altar is the place where Christ's Body and Blood, the most sacred of all sacrifices, are laid. Consequently the altar must be dedicated in a special way to God's service. The bishop consecrates the altar or the altar stone using holy oils, incense, holy water, long prayers and solemn

ceremony. Five crosses, in memory of the Five Wounds of Christ's Body, are impressed on the altar table or altar stone; one on each corner and one in the center. Because in the early days Mass was frequently read over the tombs of martyrs, the Church has ordered that the **relics of martyrs** be placed below the altar table or at least in the altar stone. After ascending the altar steps in the beginning of the Mass, the priest kisses the altar in the center at the same time saying a prayer in honor of the martyrs and saints whose relics lie there.

Answer to Question VIII. **The altar is consecrated by the bishop and contains sacred relics of the martyrs.**

The principal altar in the church is called "the High Altar" and the others "the Side Altars." The main parts of the altar are the center, the gospel side (the left hand side facing the altar) and the epistle side, (the right side looking towards the altar). On some altars there is a little house called the **"Tabernacle,"** where Christ dwells in the Holy Eucharist. The interior of the Tabernacle is lined with silk and there is a little door in the front. The tabernacle is covered entirely with a curtain like a tent or at least there is a curtain before the door to remind us that Christ lives there. The little red **"Sanctuary Lamp,"** the symbol of love, keeps guard night and day before the Tabernacle.

Question IX. **What do the steps leading up to the altar and the crucifix on the altar remind us of?**

The altar is usually somewhat elevated with steps leading up to it, in order to remind us of Mount Calvary, where Christ offered the great Sacrifice of Himself. In the Mass Christ represents and renews this same Sacrifice. The crucifix tells us of the same truth.

Answer to Question IX. **The steps leading up to the altar and the crucifix on the altar remind us of Mount Calvary where Christ offered the great Sacrifice of Himself.**

The altar is covered with three **linen cloths** out of reverence to the Holy Eucharist. These cloths are blessed by the bishop (or one who has the proper faculty) and are used to absorb the Precious Blood in case the chalice should accidentally be overturned. These cloths, moreover, remind us of the linens which were wrapped about Christ's Body before It was laid in the tomb. On Holy Thursday morning the altar is stripped to recall to our minds that Christ's Body was stripped of Its garments before His death on the cross.

CHAPTER III.

CANDLES, INCENSE AND HOLY WATER.

One of the principal ornaments of the altar are the **candles.** The Church prescribes that at least the two candles required for Holy Mass be made (for the most part) of pure beeswax. It is also proper that the candles be blessed. Formerly

candles were used in the catacombs to light up the dark rooms. But that is no longer the only reason, especially since the Church could make use of so many better means for obtaining light The chief reason why the Church employs candles in the divine service is, because burning candles have certain mystic meanings, that is to say, they speak a language of their own; they tell us many beautiful things.

Question X. **What do burning candles on the altar signify?**

1) The burning candle represents Jesus Christ, God and Man. The pure wax gathered by the bees from beautiful flowers tells us of Christ's pure Body born of the immaculate Virgin Mary. The wick speaks of Christ's Soul. The lighted candle reminds us of Christ, the Light of the world. When we see burning candles on the altar during Mass, therefore, we should remember that Christ is there to offer His Body and Soul for our sakes, the Light of the world, the Furnace of love, and if we approach Him devoutly during the Mass He will give us some of this light and warmth and beauty.

2) The burning candle is a symbol of the three theological virtues. Faith is a light which drives away darkness and ignorance. We need faith especially at the Mass, so that we may believe that Christ is really there with Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, under the appearances of bread and wine. Hope continually tends upward. Just as the little flame of the candle is always flickering

and rising upward, so Christian hope urges us to look up continually to our true home in heaven. The burning candle tells us, too, of Charity. As the burning flame consumes the wax and wick of the candle, so we too, should offer our body and soul by charity to God. We ought to practice these virtues especially during Mass.

3) Light makes us feel joyful and glad just as darkness makes us sad and downcast. Many lighted candles fill us with feelings of joy and make the service of God solemn and beautiful. For example, how sad we feel when the candles are extinguishd during the ceremony called the Tenebrae in Holy Week and how glad we are when the Easter Candle, representing the risen Christ, appears in the church!

Answer to Question X. **Burning candles on the altar signify: 1) Christ, God and Man, the light of the world; 2) the three virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity and 3) they make the divine service more solemn and beautiful.**

Besides candles the Church also prescribes the use of **incense** at certain times during the divine service. Incense is a resin or gum which flows from the trunk of the incense tree of Africa, India and certain eastern countries. This resin is dried in the air and gathered for use. Some sweet smelling herbs may also be added in small quantities.

In the Old Testament God ordered that incense be offered to Him as a sacrifice. The pagans, too, used it as a sacrifice to their false gods. In the

New Law the Christians used it quite early in the divine service, although it did not come into common use until about nine hundred years ago. With us Christians incense is not a sacrifice. Therefore it may be used also to show honor to persons and sacred things.

Question XI. **Why is burning incense used at Mass?**

1) Burning incense is a symbol of prayer. Through the love of God our hearts are set on fire, as it were, and we send up to God sweet prayer and praise. The clouds of incense represent these prayers and the sweet odor tells us that God is pleased with our prayers. These clouds fill the whole church to remind us that while there we ought to think only of God and lay aside all distraction.

2) Burning incense represents the grace of God. The clouds of incense ascend to heaven representing our prayers; they descend again to tell us that God sends us His grace from heaven to make our souls pleasing to Him.

3) As a sign of reverence for holy persons and objects the Church incenses the priest, people, crucifix, gospel book, etc. The priest is incensed because he is the representative of Christ and deserves special reverence. The other ministers of the altar and the people are incensed out of reverence and to remind them that they are the temples of the Holy Ghost. The altar is incensed because it is a consecrated place which ought always to be surrounded by prayers and God's grace.

(In a Solemn High Mass the priest incenses the host and chalice by forming three crosses over them with the censer and by surrounding them with three circles of incense, in order to express that this Sacrifice is a representation and renewal of the Great Sacrifice of the Cross and that it ought to be separated from all profane uses and surrounded by a circle of prayers.)

4) Burning incense is used at a Solemn High Mass to give to the service more solemnity and to urge us to greater piety and devotion. The use of incense at Mass ought, therefore, to remind us of all these things and to incite us to be more devout than usual, so that we may obtain more grace from God.

Answer to Question XI. **Burning incense is used at Mass 1) as a symbol of devout prayer which ascends to God as a sweet odor; 2) as a symbol of God's grace which descends upon us in return; 3) as a sign of reverence or respect to sacred persons and objects and 4) to make the divine service more solemn and beautiful.**

Question XII. **Why does the priest sprinkle the people with holy water before the High Mass on Sundays?**

Water blessed by the priest with the sign of the cross, blessed salt and certain prayers is called **holy water.** The Church uses holy water quite commonly and hence at Mass also. The priest blesses water before the principal Mass on Sundays. He then sprinkles the congregation with this holy water, while the choir sings a hymn called

the **"Asperges".** The meaning of this ceremony is that we should recall the great benefit of our holy baptism and ask God to purify our souls from sin, so that we may assist properly at Mass. Before entering the church we ought to take holy water devoutly and ask God to make our hearts pure, so that we may be worthy to assist at Mass and again on leaving the church, so that we may gain the merit of a clean heart.

Answer to Question XII. **The priest sprinkles the people with holy water before the High Mass on Sundays to remind them of the grace of their baptism and of the need of purifying their hearts, so that they may be worthy to assist at Holy Mass.**

CHAPTER IV.

THE SACRED VESSELS.

After the altar the most important objects connected with the divine service are the **sacred vessels.** The Jews and the pagans used sacred vessels for divine service in their temples. These vessels were made of costly material and were employed only for divine worship. Surely there is much greater reason for using the very best material for the sacred vessels in the service of the Catholic Church, for these vessels contain the holiest Sacrifice of heaven and earth, Christ's most sacred Body and Blood.

Question XIII. **What sacred vessels are used in the Mass?**

The sacred vessels used on the altar may be divided into two classes: a) those used directly for the Sacrifice and b) those which are used on the altar but not directly for the Mass. The former class contains the following vessels: (See picture, p. 62). a) The **chalice** or cup for the wine and water of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The wine is made of the pure juice of the grape. b) The **paten** or plate on which is offered the altar bread in the Holy Sacrifice. The altar bread or host is made from pure wheaten flour and water, is round in form, and is baked in an oven or between two heated irons. These two vessels must be made of gold or silver and at least the part which directly touches the Sacred Species must be gilt. After the consecration the chalice and paten are like the sepulchre where Christ's Body lay buried. Because these vessels come into such close contact with the Adorable Sacrifice, the Church commands that they be made of rich material and be consecrated by the bishop. Ordinarily only the priest may touch these vessels.

Answer to Question XIII. **The sacred vessels used in the Mass are 1) the chalice and 2) the paten, both of which are consecrated by the bishop.**

Question XIV. **What linens and coverings are used for the sacred vessels?**

The linens for the sacred vessels are: a) the **corporal,** a square white linen cloth (starched), upon which the Sacred Host and chalice rest during the Mass. It is called corporal from the Latin word "corpus" (body), because Christ's Body is

laid upon it. The corporal receives a special blessing. b) The **pall,** a square piece of cardboard covered with white linen and used as a protection over the chalice. The pall is blessed like the corporal. c) The **purificator,** an oblong piece of white linen, which is used to cleanse the chalice and paten and to dry the priest's fingers. The purificator is not specially blessed. These linens are first washed by a person in Sacred Orders before being handed over to lay persons to be laundered.

The coverings for the sacred vessels are: a) The **burse,** a small square case or bag consisting of two cardboards fastened together with an opening at one end into which the folded corporal is placed when not in use. b) The **chalice veil,** a large square cloth used for covering the chalice. The figure of a cross may be marked on the burse and chalice veil, which are, moreover, made of the same goods and color as the vestments of the priest. (See picture, p. 63.)

Answer to Question XIV. **The linens for the sacred vessels are: 1) the corporal, 2) the pall and**

3) the purificator. The coverings are 1) the burse and 2) the chalice-veil.

Question XV. **What other vessels are used on the altar?**

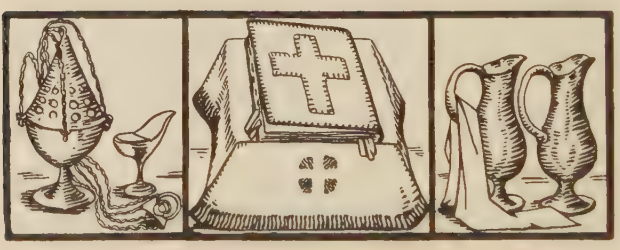
The other vessels which are used on the altar but not directly for the Mass are the following: a) the **ciborium,** a chalice-like vessel which is used to hold the consecrated particles for Holy Communion. It is called ciborium from the Latin word

"cibus" (food). The interior of the ciborium must be gilt. A cover surmounted by a cross protects the consecrated particles. When the ciborium contains the consecrated particles it is covered by a white veil, otherwise the veil is removed. The ciborium must be blessed. b) The **monstrance** or **ostensorium,** a large vessel of costly material and beautifully decorated in various styles, is used to show the Sacred Host for public adoration and for benediction. It is the throne of the Eucharistic King. c) The **lunette,** a little gold case of circular or crescent shape, (sometimes having glass covers)

is used to hold the Sacred Host when it is placed in the monstrance. (See picture, p. 94.)

Answer to Question XV. **The other sacred vessels used on the altar are 1) the ciborium, 2) the monstrance or ostensorium and 3) the lunette.**

Besides these vessels we might also mention 1) the **cruets,** little vessels that contain the wine and water to be used in the Mass. There is a small towel placed near the cruets for drying the



priest's fingers. 2) The **ablution vase,** a small vessel containing water for purifying the priest's fingers after they have touched the Sacred Host. There is a little towel next to this vase. 3) The **censer,** a vessel that contains burning charcoal upon which incense is thrown. With the Jews and pagans the censer was stationary and stood in their temples. In the beginning the censer was stationary also in the Christian churches, but later on the Christians carried it about in processions and hence gradually it was made smaller and chains were attached to it as at present. 4) The

incense boat is a small vessel shaped like a boat which contains incense for the censer. A little spoon is used to put the incense into the censer.

On the altar during the Mass there is a book stand for the **Missal** or **Mass book** which contains the prayers to be read during Mass. Some of these prayers are printed for convenience sake on the **altar cards,** which are placed in the center, on the gospel and the epistle sides of the altar. (See picture, p. 62.)

CHAPTER V.

THE PRIEST.

Question XVI. **What does the word priest mean?**

Nearly every religion has certain men, who have been appointed to be ministers of divine worship. It is their duty to pay homage to the Almighty in the name of the people and particularly to offer sacrifice. These ministers who stand between God and the people are called **priests.** St. Paul says (Ep. to Hebrews 5. 1): "Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins."

Answer to Question XVI. **The word priest means the person who is appointed by lawful authority to worship God in the name of the people and especially to offer sacrifice.**

Question XVII. **Has every religion priests?**

In the early days the head of the family or of the tribe was the priest. The pagans, too, had

priests and the people looked up to them with great respect and reverence. Formerly in China the emperor performed the office of priest. In the Old Testament God commanded Moses to anoint his brother Aaron high priest of the Jews. He also appointed Aaron's sons and their descendants to be His priests. The other men of the tribe of Levi were named levites or assistants of the priests. In the New Testament, too, God has appointed certain men to be His priests.

Answer to Question XVII. **Nearly every religion whether true or false has priests.**

Question XVIII. **Who is the great High Priest of the New Testament?**

In the New Law the great High Priest is Jesus Christ, God and Man, Who stands between the Almighty and all the world "always living to intercede for us" (Ep. to Hebrews, 7, 25) and offering Himself forever as a most pleasing Sacrifice to God. The prophet said of Christ: "Thou art a Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech" (Ps. 109, 4). Christ performed the office of Priest after the Last Supper by offering Himself in an unbloody manner under the forms of bread and wine in Holy Mass. Thereupon He said to His apostles: "Do this in commemoration of Me" (St. Luke 22, 19). At that solemn moment He ordained them priests (and bishops). But we know that the apostles died. Did the Priesthood cease with their death? — That could not be, because the Church, as Christ founded it, was to continue to the end of time. How then does the Priesthood

continue in the Church of Christ? — The apostles ordained other worthy men to be priests and to act in the name of Christ. So it has continued in the Catholic Church up to the present day.

Answer to Question XVIII. **The great High Priest of the New Testament is Jesus Christ Who still acts through His visible representatives, the priests of the Catholic Church.**

Question XIX. **How is the Christian Priesthood given?**

The great High Priest Jesus Christ Himself instituted the Priesthood of the New Testament and conferred it on His apostles through the **Sacrament of Holy Orders.** The apostles as bishops laid their hands upon other worthy men and gave them the power and grace of the Priesthood by means of the same Sacrament of Holy Orders. Ever since that time the bishops of the Catholic Church, the lawful successors of the apostles, have continued to ordain priests in Christ's name. (See picture, p. 65.)

The Sacrament of Holy Orders gives to bishops, priests and ministers of the Church, the grace and power to perform their sacred duties in Christ's name. It impresses, moreover, the indelible mark of the Priest upon the soul of the one who receives the sacrament. The various ceremonies by which Holy Orders are conferred are most solemn and touching. In the first place, the candidate for the Priesthood is separated from the general body of Christians (the laity) and is received into the select body of Christ's ministers

(the clergy) by means of a ceremony called "the **tonsure.**" The bishop cuts the hair on the head of the candidate in the form of a cross as a sign that he has left the world and its pleasures and "has chosen the Lord as the portion of his inheritance." His dress is henceforth the cassock and biretta.

He must ascend the seven steps that lead up to the altar. Each of these steps gives him special powers to perform the sacred duties of the ministry. He receives the **four minor orders** which make him a) **porter** or doorkeeper with power to guard the House of God; b) **lector** or reader with the right to read certain portions from the Bible during divine service; c) **exorcist** with power to expel evil spirits from those possessed and d) **acolyte** with the power to serve at the altar. (Now the altar boys perform some of these lower offices or duties of the Church.)

Thereupon the candidate receives the **three major orders,** which give him more power to perform the *higher* offices or duties of the ministry. He is made a) **subdeacon** with power to serve the deacon and priest and to sing the epistle in a Solemn Mass; to bring the chalice and altar bread to the altar and to serve the water for the Mass; b) **deacon** with power to assist the priest directly and to sing the gospel in a Solemn Mass, to preach, baptize solemnly and administer Holy Communion; c) **priest** with power to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; to administer the sacraments, except Confirmation and Holy Orders; to

preach, etc. The **bishop** has the fulness of priestly powers and is the chief shepherd of the diocese.

Answer to Question XIX. **The Christian Priesthood is given by the bishop through the sacrament of Holy Orders, which was instituted by Christ Himself to give grace and power to priests to perform their sacred duties in His name.**

Question XX. **What is the chief office of the Catholic Priest?**

Priest and sacrifice go together, so that the chief office of the priest is to offer sacrifice. The Catholic priest offers the great Sacrifice of Christ's Body and Blood in the name and by the power of Christ in the Mass. He says over the bread: "This is my Body" and over the chalice of wine: "This is my Blood." By the words of Consecration Christ Himself becomes present under the appearances of bread and wine and offers Himself anew to God through the ministry of His priests. What a great dignity is not the Catholic Priesthood! The priests of the Old Law cannot be compared with those of the New Law; for the priests of the Old Testament offered sacrifices that were imperfect and without much power, whereas the priests of the New Law offer to God the greatest Sacrifice which the world has ever seen. They must be called by God Himself to be priests by **divine vocation.** "Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was" (Ep. to Hebrews, 5, 4). They must promise never to marry (vow of perpetual chastity); they must study God's Word diligently and prepare

themselves for many years in the seminary under the care of the bishop, before they are admitted to share in the Priesthood of Jesus Christ.

Answer to Question XX. **The chief office of the Catholic Priest is to offer the Adorable Sacrifice of Christ's Body and Blood in the Holy Mass.**

Always honor and reverence your priests as representatives of Jesus Christ and pray to God to give to them grace to be worthy of their high calling and heavenly power.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SACRED VESTMENTS.

The holiness of God's temple as well as the sanctity of the divine service requires that the ministers come to the altar clothed in **sacred vestments** which show reverence for the service of God. When looking at these special garments both ministers and people are reminded continually of the sacred worship that is taking place. The ministers and priests among Jews and pagans performed the services in their temples while clothed in sacred vestments.

Question XXI. **Why does the priest wear particular vestments while at the altar?**

The priests of the Catholic Church and the other ministers of the altar wear vestments of a special kind during services in the church, because the worship which they perform is most sacred. These vestments have not been copied or taken from the

Jews or pagans. They were the ordinary every day dress of the people who lived in the time of Christ and the apostles. To be sure, the style of clothing then was much different from that of today. Formerly men wore long, loose garments reaching to the ankles and fastened about the waist with a cincture or belt. The apostles and priests in the early days wore this style of garment for everyday use, but when performing the divine service, as might be expected, they would lay aside their ordinary dress and put on vestments of the same style but of better material. After the services they would again wear their ordinary garments. Gradually these vestments were made of better material, with costly decorations, and in the course of time the style changed until the vestments became as we see them today. Before being used these vestments are blessed either by the bishop or the priest who has received the power to bless them. Thereby they became dedicated to God's service.

Answer to Question XXI. **The priest wears particular vestments while at the altar, in order to remind us of the holiness of the worship which he is performing.**

Question XXII. **What sacred vestments does the priest wear during Holy Mass?**

The sacred vestments which the priest wears for Mass are: a) the **amice,** a short white linen cloth, square or oblong in shape, having two strings attached to fasten it to the shoulders. Formerly it was used instead of a hat to cover the head. It

was also employed to protect the throat and to keep the rich garments from becoming soiled. (See picture, p. 72.) b) The **alb,** a white linen garment reaching nearly to the ground with close fitting sleeves. It is secured around the waist by a girdle. It is called alb from the latin word "alba" (white garments). The alb was part of the ordinary dress

of the people living in the time of the apostles, especially in the city of Rome. Now it is customary to add decorations of lace to the sleeves and around the bottom. (See picture, p. 72.) c) The **cincture** or girdle, a long cord with two tassels on the ends which is used to gather the wide alb together about the waist. (See picture, p. 72.) d) The **maniple,** a vestment in the form of a band hanging from the

left arm and having a cross embroidered in the middle and near the two ends. In the early days of the Christian Church the maniple was simply a handkerchief which the minister or assistant carried in his left hand for use during the service. Generally it was folded and carried in the left hand out of reverence for the sacred vessels, so that the hand might not touch them directly. Gradually, however, it became customary to carry the maniple on the left arm and in the course of time it took the shape in which we see it now. (See picture, p. 72.) e) The **stole,** a long, narrow vestment, shaped like a wide ribbon which hangs from the neck down over the breast and having the figure of a cross marked in the middle and near the two ends. In the beginning the stole was a long streamer of withe cloth carried over the left shoulder and used by the deacon to wipe the sacred vessels and his hands during the service. In the course of time the stole was no longer used for this purpose and became the sign or mark of the spiritual power of the person who wore it. It was then decorated and made of better material. (See picture, p. 72.) f) The **chasuble,** from the Latin word "casula" (little house), because it covers the whole person of the priest like a little house, was formerly the outer garment worn by the people of Rome, especially for outdoor use. (See picture, p. 74.) It consisted of one whole piece of cloth with an opening at the center just large enough to allow the head to pass through. The figure of a cross is embroidered on the back of the chasuble to remind us of the cross which Christ bore for our sakes to

Mount Calvary. Because the chasuble was so large it was necessary for the deacon to assist the celebrant at the altar as he does even now in a Solemn Mass, and as the altar boy does at the elevation, although at the present time the chasuble is smaller and is shaped differently than formerly.

Answer to Question XXII. **During Holy Mass the priest wears the following sacred vestments: 1) the amice, 2) the alb, 3) the cincture, 4) the maniple, 5) the stole and 6) the chasuble.**

Question XXIII. **What vestment does the priest wear in processions and for benediction?**

The **cope** is a long, wide vestment shaped like a cloak open in the front and having a sort of cape

attached to it. In the days of the apostles the cope was simply an outer garment worn by the people for outdoor use, especially in bad weather. (See picture, p. 76.) That accounts for the hood, which now looks like a cape and is merely a decoration. The cope is simply another form of the chasuble open in the front. It is used in processions, for the Asperges on Sundays before High Mass and at Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Answer to Question XXIII. **In processions and for benediction the priest wears the cope.**

Question XXIV. **What vestments do the other ministers of the altar wear?**

The other ministers of the altar wear certain vestments which are the special mark or sign of their particular order or rank. As was mentioned before, there are seven orders or powers which a priest receives to minister at the altar. These orders are called minor and major. There are special vestments, which are the outward mark of these orders. Those in **minor orders** wear: 1) the **cassock,** a long black garment reaching to the ankles and buttoned in front and 2) the **biretta** or hat. The cassock and biretta are not vestments strictly so called. They are the ordinary dress of clerics. (See picture, p. 76.) The special vestment of those in minor orders while at the altar is the **surplice,** a white linen vestment with wide sleeves. The altar boys wear the cassock and surplice now while serving at the altar. The surplice is simply a shortened form of the alb. (See picture, p. 76.)

Those in **major orders** wear the following vestments: 1) The subdeacon has besides the cassock and biretta, also the amice, the alb and cincture. But his special vestments are the **maniple** and the **tunic.** (See picture, p. 74.) He wears the tunic especially at a Solemn Mass. 2) The deacon's special vestments are the **stole,** which he wears like a sash

from the left shoulder and crossed on the right side, and the **dalmatic,** which is like the tunic of the subdeacon. Formerly it was made of better material and was more richly decorated. (See picture, p. 74.) The vestments of the priest have already been explained. The bishop at a Solemn (Pontifical) Mass, as a sign that he has all the powers of the Priesthood, wears all of these vestments,

although they are, of course, made of lighter material. There is another vestment which the priest wears at Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament and which the subdeacon makes use of during the Solemn Mass from the Offertory to the end of the Pater noster. It is called the **humeral veil** and is worn out of respect to the Blessed Sacrament and to hide the sacred paten from the public gaze. (See picture, p. 74.)

Answer to Question XXIV. **The other ministers of the altar wear besides the cassock and biretta special vestments as a sign of their order. Those in minor orders wear the surplice, the subdeacon the maniple and tunic and the deacon the stole and dalmatic.**

These sacred vestments tell us, moreover, of the instruments of suffering which the Jews used against Christ. The amice reminds us of the cloth which blindfolded Jesus while His enemies struck Him. The alb speaks of the white garment of the fool with which Jesus was clothed. The cincture reminds us of the rope with which Jesus was bound. The maniple recalls the chains which fastened Jesus to the pillar. The stole tells us of the heavy cross which Jesus carried, while the chasuble speaks of the garment of mockery which the Jews placed on Jesus. Finally, the vestments are a sign of the virtues with which all who assist at Mass should be clothed. The priest recites various prayers while vesting, asking God for grace to practice these virtues.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LITURGICAL COLORS.

Colors have a great influence upon us. Thus light colors make us feel joyous whereas dark colors cause sadness and gloom. The Church, knowing this, prescribes that the vestments worn by the sacred ministers and the drapery for the altar be of certain colors.

Question XXV. **What colors does the Church use in the sacred vestments and the drapery of the altar?**

In the beginning only white was used, but gradually other colors were added so that today there are five liturgical colors, that is to say, five colors are used in the divine service by the command of the Church. They are white, red, green, violet and black. Vestments of gold may also be used instead of white, red and green. (See picture. p. 80.)

Answer to Question XXV. **The Church uses five colors in the sacred vestments and the drapery of the altar namely, white, red, green, violet and black.**

Question XXVI. **What is the meaning of these colors?**

White is the color of light and brightness. It signifies purity and holiness; also heavenly joy and beauty. It is used on all feasts of our Lord, except those of His Passion, on the feast of the Holy Trinity, the feasts of the Blessed Virgin, the Angels, all the Saints who are not martyrs, in the services in connection with the Blessed Sacrament

and the burial of children. White tells us to be holy, so that we, too, one day may obtain the joys of heaven.

Red, the color of fire and blood, signifies the blood of our Blessed Lord and the martyrs and the fire of the Holy Ghost. It is used on all feasts of the Passion of our Lord, the martyrs, the apostles, the Finding and the Exaltation of the Cross and on Pentecost, the day on which the Holy Ghost came down on the first Christians in the shape of fiery tongues. Red tells us that we must keep in our hearts the fire of God's love and be ready even to shed our blood for Christ's sake.

Green, the color between light and darkness, signifies hope. After the cold winter the warm sun calls forth the green leaves and the flowers from trees and plants. Green brings hope of a rich harvest. It is used on all days which have no special festive character and do not, on the other hand, denote deep sorrow. Green reminds us that we are pilgrims on earth, that we must hope in Christ's grace and He will lead us to the green meadows of heaven where we shall receive the never fading crown of glory.

Violet or **purple** signifies the spirit of penance and mortification. It reminds us, too, of the little flower called the violet, which hides itself in the grass. Hence it stands also for the virtue of humility. Violet is used on days of penance, as for instance, during Lent and Advent, on certain Vigils and on the Rogation days. It admonishes us to pray, to do penance and to be humble if we wish sin to be taken from our hearts.

Black, the very opposite of white, signifies sorrow and mourning, such as is caused by death. It is used on Good Friday, the day of Christ's death, and in Masses for the dead.

Answer to Question XXVI. **White signifies innocence and spiritual joy; red tells of the blood of Christ and the martyrs, also the fire of the Holy Ghost; green speaks of the hope of eternal life; violet signifies humility and penance and black is the color of sorrow.**

Twice each year **rose** colored vestments may be used instead of violet, namely on the third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete) and on the fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare) to express quiet and temperate joy in the midst of the penitential season.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LANGUAGE.

Question XXVII. **What is the language called that the Catholic Church uses at divine service?**

The pastors of the Catholic Church, the bishops and priests, speak the language of the people and of the country wherever they happen to be, when preaching and instructing the faithful and also for certain public devotions. But the Catholic Church has a liturgical language, that is to say, a special language of her own, which she uses for her public worship and especially for the Holy Mass. This liturgical language is known as a dead language, because it is not spoken any longer in everyday

conversation. There is nothing extraordinary in this fact, for the Jews, too, had a special language, which was a dead language, for use during divine worship in their temple at the time of Christ and the apostles.

Answer to Question XXVII. **The language which the Catholic Church uses at divine service is called the liturgical language and because it is no longer spoken in everyday conversation it is called a dead language.**

Question XXVIII. **Did the Catholic Church always use a dead language in her public divine service?**

It is not known whether the apostles always used their own language, Aramaic, in divine service or whether they spoke the language of the people and country where they happened to be giving missions. However, it is quite probable that during the first four hundred years of the Christian Church the three languages that were written on the cross of Christ, namely, **Hebrew** (Aramaic), **Greek** and **Latin** were used at the divine service.

a) In the **east,** that is to say, in the countries about the Mediterranean Sea, Greek became the common language. There were, however, many other languages spoken by the people of the different countries in the east, for instance, Coptic in Egypt, Syriac in Syria and Palestine and others elsewhere. These various languages were used in the divine service in the east.

b) When the missionaries brought the Christian faith from the east into the **west,** namely, into Italy, France, Germany, Spain, etc., Greek was used also there at the divine service for many years. Gradually, however, the whole civilized world became subject to the Roman Empire where Latin was the common language. Rome was the capital city of the Roman Empire. Here St. Peter established the center of the Christian Church and from Rome missionaries brought the Gospel to the heathens in Germany, France, Spain, England, Ireland, etc. These Christian missionaries preached to the heathens in their own language, but they performed the divine service in the Latin language. Latin was the language of the educated people for many hundreds of years. All books and even letters were written in Latin. Lectures and solemn speeches were delivered in Latin. Everybody in those days understood Latin as we in America understand English, so that it was not at all necessary to use any other language in the divine service.

c) However, after about thirteen or fourteen hundred years new languages began to be formed slowly from the Latin, as for instance, Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, etc. Latin then became a dead language. The Church, however, continued to use Latin in divine service and especially in Holy Mass. She still uses Latin at the present day. There are now nine languages which the Catholic Church uses in the divine service, all of which are dead languages except one, namely, the Rumenian.

Answer to Question XXVIII. **For many hundreds of years at the divine service the Catholic Church used the living language of the people, which was mostly Greek in the east and Latin in the west, until gradually Greek and Latin became dead languages.**

Question XXIX. **Why does the Church continue to use a dead language in the divine service?**

Those outside the Catholic Church blame her for using a language which the people do not understand. There are, however, many reasons why the Church makes use of a dead language in the divine service.

a) Latin was one of the languages written upon the cross of Christ and is, therefore, over two thousand years old. It is the language which the apostles and early Christians used in the catacombs and churches.

b) It is mysterious and sacred because it is not used in everyday conversation on the streets. When we hear Latin in the church we know that we are away from the street and the ordinary things of life and are listening to the language of the Church.

c) It is a dead language and consequently does not change its form and meaning. A living language is continually changing. If we were to use a living language in the divine service, all sorts of errors and false meanings might creep in and the prayers would no longer be the same that were used in the early Church. A dead language

is, moreover, a great means of preserving the unity of the Church. No matter in what country or among what people a Catholic happens to be, in the church he can always feel at home, because he hears the same language at the divine service. It is easy also for a priest traveling in a foreign country to read Mass in the common language of the Church, even though he does not understand the language of the people amongst whom he may be staying.

Most of the heretics who have left the true Church used at divine service the language of the country in which they were living. The result was that those churches became national churches instead of Catholic or universal, as for instance, the lutheran church in Germany, the episcopalian church in England, etc.

It is well to know that besides Latin the Church still uses in the Mass some Greek words, for example, Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy on us), and some Hebrew words, Alleluja (Glory be to the Lord), Sabaoth (Lord of armies), Hosanna (Praise to God) and Amen (So be it).

Answer to Question XXIX. **The Catholic Church continues to use a dead language in the divine service: 1) because it is venerable for its age, since it was used from the time of the apostles; 2) it is sacred, for it is not used like the everyday language of the streets; 3) it remains always the same and helps to preserve the prayers and the unity of the Church.**

Question XXX. **Is it necessary for us to understand the liturgical language of the Mass?**

We must remember that the Mass is not a sermon. It is a great **act** of divine worship. We can please God by watching attentively the actions of the priest at the altar and by joining our devotion with his. Furthermore, our prayer books have the translation of the Latin prayers, so that is is easy to follow the meaning of the words.

Answer to Question XXX. **The Mass is not a sermon, but rather a great act of religion in which all the faithful can join without understanding the liturgical language. Moreover, our prayer books have the translation of all the prayers used in the Mass.**

CHAPTER IX.

THE LITURGY OR RITE.

Question XXXI. **What is the Christian liturgy or rite?**

Christ Himself celebrated the first Holy Mass at the Last Supper "by taking bread into His hands, giving thanks to His heavenly Father, breaking and giving it to His disciples saying: Take and eat ye all of this, FOR THIS IS MY BODY. Likewise taking the chalice of wine into His hands and giving thanks, blessing it He gave it to them saying: Take and drink ye all of this, FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD. DO THIS

IN COMMEMORATION OF ME." Thereupon the apostles received the Consecrated Bread and Wine in Holy Communion.

Now what Christ did was the rule for the apostles and their successors, the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church. a) In the early days the apostles and their successors, bishops and priests, would gather together with the faithful to celebrate Holy Mass. First, lessons or portions of the Holy Scriptures were read; psalms were sung; prayers were recited by the bishop in the name of all, the people answering in Hebrew, "Amen." A sermon or explanation of what had just been read from the Scriptures was then given by the bishop or priest. This was the first part of the Mass. It was called the Mass of the Catechumens.

b) The Mass proper, the Holy Sacrifice of the Eucharist, at which only those who were baptized were allowed to be present, took place immediately after the Catechumens had left. This part of the service was called the Mass of the Faithful. Bread and wine mixed with a little water were offered by the bishop or priest; prayers were said for the living and dead; the words of Consecration were pronounced; the Lord's prayer (the Our Father) was recited; the kiss of peace was given; the sign of the cross was made; the hands were raised during the prayers; the Consecrated Bread was broken; Holy Communion was received by those present and a thanksgiving was made. These parts of the Mass were used from the time of the apostles themselves. To be

sure, the prayers and ceremonies were not written down as we have them now printed in our missal or Mass book. They were there nevertheless. more or less definite, and the divine service was performed in a more or less set manner. This manner of performing the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with certain prayers and ceremonies is called the liturgy or the rite.

Answer to Question XXXI. **The Christian liturgy or rite is the manner or the set form of prayers and ceremonies according to which the divine service, especially the Holy Mass, is performed.**

Question XXXII. **How many kinds of liturgies or rites are there in the Catholic Church?**

The successors of St. Peter and the apostles, the popes and bishops, followed the liturgy or rite of the apostles when offering up the Holy Sacrifice. But in the course of time they added new prayers and ceremonies. When new churches were formed in different places by the Catholic missionaries these new churches would copy more or less closely the liturgy or rite of the older or mother Church, for the Christians believed that they were all members of the one same Church, of the same Body of Jesus Christ. However, we must remember that the Church of Christ was made up of people who spoke many different languages and had different customs. Gradually a very great number of different liturgies or rites arose in various parts of the world. The churches

that were near certain large cities like Alexandria, Antioch, Rome, etc., copied the liturgies of that mother Church and thus certain liturgies were formed from which all other liturgies have come just as many branches come from the common trunk of a tree.

In one word, just as the Catholics throughout the whole world agree with one another in the one faith of Jesus Christ, but have different languages and customs in the various countries, so, too, the Catholics of the whole world believe in the one same Sacrifice of the Mass but use different rites or liturgies in the Mass. There are two main divisions of liturgies in the Catholic Church: the liturgies of the Eastern or Greek Church and of the Western or Latin Church.

Answer to Question XXXII. **There are two main kinds of liturgies, namely, the liturgies of the Eeastern or Greek Church and the liturgies of the Western or Latin Church.**

Question XXXIII. **What liturgy or rite do we follow in the Mass?**

The Eastern or Greek Church has a great many different rites or liturgies. The Western or Latin Church, however, has only a few rites. They differ from one another in the prayers and ceremonies, but all agree in the main parts, in those things, namely, which have come from the apostles. At present the principal liturgy or rite in the Western Church (to which we belong) is called the Roman Liturgy or Rite. It is so called, because

it is the liturgy used at Rome, the see of St. Peter, the center of the Church of Christ.

Answer to Question XXXIII. **We use the Roman Liturgy or Rite in the divine service, especially in the Mass.**

CHAPTER X.

THE WORD MASS AND THE KINDS OF MASSES.

Question XXXIV. **What does the word Mass mean?**

In the early days of the Church the Holy Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ was called by various names, for instance, the Breaking of the Bread, the Eucharist, the Liturgy (which is still used up to the present day in the Eastern or Greek church), the Lord's Supper, the Sacrifice, the Mysteries, the Sacrament of the Altar, etc. It was only after the seventh century that the word Mass was used generally or commonly in the Western Church. In early times it was quite common to close a meeting, civil or religious, with the message or cry, "Ite missa est:" "Go, it is the dismissal;" "Go, the meeting is over." When the Christians met to offer the great unbloody Sacrifice of the New Law, the Catechumens, that is to say, those persons who were not yet baptized but were preparing for baptism, were allowed to remain in the church until after the sermon or instruction just before the Offertory of the Mass. The deacon would then turn

about and facing the Catechumens call out: "Ite missa est;" "Go, it is the dismissal." Thereupon the Catechumens left the church. This part of the Mass was called the **Mass of the Catechumens.**

The Offertory then took place and the Mass continued to the end. After the Communion the deacon would again announce the message: "Ite missa est," by which the Faithful were sent away. This part of the Mass received the name of the **Mass of the Faithful.** From this ceremony by which the people were dismissed from the Holy Sacrifice the whole ceremony of the Eucharist began to be called by the one word "Mass" or dismissal.

Answer to Question XXXIV. **The word Mass comes from the Latin word "Missa" in the phrase "Ite Missa est," by which the deacon sent away the people assisting at the Sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist. Gradually the people called the whole ceremony of the priest at the altar by the word "Mass" or dismissal.**

Question XXXV. **How many kinds of Masses are there?**

There is, of course, only one Mass, just as there is only one Sacrifice of Christ's Body and Blood. However, we may speak of different kinds of Masses according as the Mass is offered up without any special ceremony or with great solemnity, for the living or the dead, by a simple priest or by a bishop, etc. The principal kinds of Masses

are: a) the **Low Mass,** which is read quietly by the priest without singing; b) the **High** or **Sung Mass,** certain parts of which are sung by the priest and the choir; c) the **Solemn High Mass,** which is celebrated by the priest assisted by a deacon and subdeacon; d) the **Pontifical High Mass,** which is sung by the bishop; e) the **Requiem Mass,** which is read by the priest in black vestments for the dead; f) the **Nuptial Mass,** which is celebrated with special ceremonies for those just married. There are several other kinds of Masses. One Mass is, of course, just as pleasing to God as another, because the same Christ is offered to God and the same Christ offers Himself to God in the Mass. Sometimes, however, a High Mass brings us more blessings and graces, because the singing, the solemnity and the special ceremonies cause us to be more devout and thus we become more pleasing to God who, therefore, grants us more readily what we desire.

Answer to Question XXXV. **There are many kinds of Masses, the principal of which are: 1) the Low Mass; 2) the High or Sung Mass; 3) the Solemn High Mass; 4) the Pontifical Mass; 5) the Requiem Mass; 6) the Nuptial or Wedding Mass.**

Question XXXVI. **Which are the principal parts of the Mass?**

Recall the scene of the first Mass, which Christ offered at the Last Supper. (See picture, p. 24.) Taking bread into His hands He gave thanks to

God and blessed it. Likewise, also, the chalice of wine. By this ceremony Christ separated the bread and wine from the ordinary everyday use and prepared them for the service of God. This was the **Offertory** of the first Mass. He then spoke the words of Consecration over the bread and wine: "This is my Body: This is the chalice of my Blood: Do this in commemoration of Me." By these words the bread and wine were changed into Christ's sacred Body and Blood and offered as a Sacrifice to the Almighty. This was the **Consecration** of the first Mass. It is the chief part of the Mass, for it is the great Sacrifice Itself. Without the Consecration there would be no Mass at all. It is also called the Elevation, because the Sacred Host and Chalice are elevated or raised up for the adoration of the people. Finally, Christ gave His sacred Body and Blood to His apostles under the form of bread and wine, saying: "Take and eat ye all of this: Take and drink ye all of this." They were to eat and drink of the Sacrifice and thus become closely united to Almighty God. This was the **Communion** of the first Mass.

Now the Mass in the Catholic Church is today and has ever been the very same Sacrifice, that Christ offered at the Last Supper. Therefore, the three principal parts are the Offertory, the Consecration and the Communion.

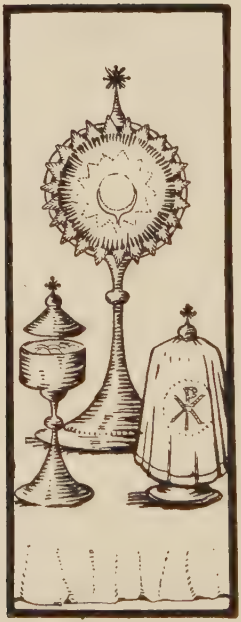
Answer to Question XXXVI. **The principal parts of the Mass are: 1) the Offertory, by which the bread and wine are separated from common use**

and prepared for the Sacrifice; 2) the Consecration, by which the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ and offered to God as a Sacrifice and 3) the Communion, by which the priest and people partake of the Sacrifice and are thus united closely with God.

Question XXXVII. **What is the Canon of the Mass?**

Holy Mass is composed of many beautiful prayers, some of which change according to the feast or the season, whereas others always remain the same. The most sacred part of the Mass, however, is the Consecration. Now the prayers that go immediately before and after the Consecration are most sacred. From the very earliest times the Church has been most careful to keep these prayers from changing their form. They are called the **Canon** from the Greek word "kanon" (rule), for these prayers are the rule which every priest must follow most closely when reading Mass. The Canon is one long prayer of thanksgiving. It begins with the words "Te igitur" immediately after the Sanctus and the Benedictus and extends up to the Pater noster. The whole of the Canon is recited silently, because it is the special prayer of the priest as the representative of Jesus Christ, the great High Priest. Its quiet recitation increases our reverence for the most sacred moment of the Mass and reminds us also of the silent prayer of our Lord in the Garden of Olives and during the Passion. (See picture, p. 152.)

Answer to Question XXXVII. **The Canon of the Mass is the most sacred and unchangeable part of Holy Mass that comes after the Sanctus and before the Pater noster.**



PART III.

THE PRAYERS OF HOLY MASS.

Holy Mass is a great and wonderful mystery. It ought, therefore, to be celebrated in as solemn a manner as possible. Just as we inclose a precious jewel in a case of gold or silver, so, too, the Church has in the course of time surrounded and enriched the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with beautiful prayers, pious readings and ceremonies. Every Catholic ought to understand these prayers well. Let us consider them briefly and we shall see with what great love and devotion holy Mother Church performs the Sacrifice of the Altar.

Question I. **Which are the principal prayers that are used as a preparation for the Mass from the beginning up to the Offertory?**

1) **The Prayers at the foot of the altar or the Confiteor.** (See picture, p. 98.)

The priest begins Mass at the foot of the altar by signing himself with the sign of the cross. He knows what great honor Holy Mass brings to God and what rich blessings to himself. His heart is,

therefore, filled with earnest desire to offer the Holy Sacrifice. He expresses this longing by reciting the antiphon "Introibo ad altare Dei:" "I shall go to the altar of the Lord." The people share in this wish to please God and show it outwardly by saying through the altar boy the words "Ad Deum," etc.: "To God who is the joy of my youth." The priest realizes that he is unworthy to offer the great Sacrifice. He expresses this in the words of the psalm (42): "Judica me Deus," etc., ending with the Glory be to the Father, etc. King David forced to flee from Jerusalem by his enemies was unable to take part in the sacrifices of the temple. His heart was sad, because he was away from the altar. He longed to return to the sanctuary. The psalm, "Judica me, Deus," which he wrote, tells of this. The priest, like David, yearns to go to the altar of the Lord and begs God to make him worthy by reciting the 42nd Psalm. He then repeats the antiphon Introibo, etc., and the altar boy in the name of the people answers as before Ad Deum, etc. Making the sign of the cross over himself the priest says: "Adjutorium nostrum," etc.: "Our help is in the name of the Lord;" to which the altar boy in the name of all responds: "Qui fecit coelum et terram:" "Who made heaven and earth." In spite of his sinfulness the priest rejoices, for he puts his trust in the almighty power of God. (This psalm is recited in all Masses, except Requiem Masses and those of Passion time. It is omitted during these Masses, because this psalm seeks to banish sorrow from the heart and to awaken feelings of joy, which

are out of place in Masses for the dead and during the sorrowful time of Christ's Passion.)

After the words "Adjutorium nostrum," etc. the priest bowing down deeply recites the **"Confiteor."** This is a public confession of sin made to God Almighty, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael, the Archangel, St. John the Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul and all the Saints. While reciting the words "Mea culpa" three times, the priest strikes his breast, to show that it is through his own fault that he has committed sin. The second part of the Confiteor is a prayer to all the saints to intercede with the Almighty for the priest. The people answer in the words of the altar boy: "Misereatur tui," etc., begging God to have mercy on the priest and to forgive him his sins. The priest answers "Amen:" "May it be so." Thereupon the faithful through the altar boy recite the Confiteor, to confess publicly that they, too, are sinners. In the words of the „Misereatur vestri," etc., the priest asks God to have mercy on the people and to pardon their sins. The faithful answer "Amen." Then signing himself with the sign of the cross, the priest recites the prayer "Indulgentiam," etc., in which he again asks the almighty and merciful Lord to take away the sins of all. The people through the altar boy respond "Amen:" "May God grant your prayers." Inclining his head somewhat the priest and the people (through the altar boy) recite alternately several verses beginning with the words "Deus tu," etc. and ending with the greeting "Dominus vobiscum." In these verses and responses priest and people beg God to give

them help, so that they may be able to assist worthily at the Holy Sacrifice. The people answer the greeting of the priest "Dominus vobiscum": "The Lord be with you" by saying: "Et cum spiritu tuo:" "And with thy spirit." The priest then invites the faithful to join with him in prayer by the word "Oremus:" "Let us pray." While

ascending the altar steps the priest says quietly the prayer: "Aufer a nobis," etc. in which he begs God to take from the heart of the people as well as from his own every sin, so that they may be worthy to enter the Holy of Holies. Then kissing the altar table in the middle the priest says the prayer "Oramus te," etc., beseeching God through

the merits of the saints, whose relics lie in the altar, and of all the saints to forgive his sins and the faults of the people. (In a Solemn High Mass, except Requiem Masses, the priest blesses incense saying: "May thou be blessed by Him in whose honor thou art being burned. Amen." He incenses the crucifix and the altar. Then the priest himself is incensed by the deacon.)

2) **The Introit.**

With folded hands the priest goes to the epistle side of the altar and reads the 'Introit" from the missal. It is called the introit from the Latin word "introitus," which means "entrance," because the choir used to sing the introit while the priest was entering the sanctuary to begin Mass. (In a High Mass the choir sings the introit just as soon as the priest arrives at the foot to the altar to begin Mass.) The introit is an antiphon or a set form of words that tells us of the feast that is being celebrated or gives the reason why the Mass is being offered up that day. Thus, if the Mass is said in honor of some saint or some mystery of our holy religion that thought is expressed in the words of the introit. If the Mass is read for the dead the introit begins with the words "Requiem aeternam," etc.: "Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord," etc. The words of the introit are different in nearly every Mass. The Glory be to the Father, etc. is generally added to the introit and during Easter time also the Alleluja.

3) The Kyrie eleison.

Leaving the epistle side the priest goes to the center of the altar and recites the "Kyrie eleison" alternately with the altar boy. These words are Greek and mean "Lord have mercy on us." They are said three times in honor of God the Father;

"Christe eleison:" „Christ have mercy on us" three times in honor of God the Son and "Kyrie eleison" again three times in honor of God the Ghost. Through this prayer we ask the Holy Trinity to prepare our hearts, so that they may be worthy to take part in the Sacrifice. (In a High Mass the choir sings the Kyrie.)

4) **The Gloria in excelsis Deo.** (See picture, p. 100.)

Immediately after the Kyrie the priest says aloud the "Gloria in excelsis Deo:" "Glory be to God in the highest." These words were recited by the angel to the shepherds on the fields of Bethlehem on the first Christmas night. How fitting are not these same words in Holy Mass, for during the Consecration Christ is born again into the world! The Gloria is a most beautiful hymn of praise to the Holy Trinity. In a Low Mass the priest recites the entire hymn aloud, whereas in a High Mass he sings the first words only (Gloria in excelsis Deo), and recites the rest. While the choir is singing the Gloria the priest and people sit down. The Gloria is a hymn of joy. Consequently it is omitted in times of penance, as for instance, in Advent and Lent, and in Masses for the Dead.

5) **The Collects or the Orations.**

After the Gloria (or when it is omitted, immediately after the Kyrie) the priest kisses the altar in the center, faces the people and says aloud (in a High Mass he sings) the greeting: "Dominus vobiscum:" "The Lord be with you." The altar boy in the name of the people (in a High Mass the choir) answers: "Et cum spiritu tuo:" "And with thy spirit." This is a form of salutation that was quite common among the Jews. The priest then goes to the epistle side of the altar and holding his hands extended reads (in a High Mass sings) a certain prayer or prayers from the missal. These prayers are called the "Collects," or the "Orations"

(from the Latin word "Collecta," "gathering," because these prayers were recited over the people gathered together for prayer.) The Collect begins with the "Oremus:" "Let us pray" and ends generally with the words "Per Dominum," etc.: "Through Jesus Christ our Lord," etc. The altar boy answers (in a High Mass the choir sings)

"Amen:" "So be it or may God grant what you ask." Usually there is only one Collect, but sometimes there are several. Like the introit the Collect is different in every Mass according to the feast or the purpose for which the Mass is being celebrated. It contains petitions or special requests to the saints in whose honor the Mass is being

read or to God directly for help of soul and body. In a Requiem Mass this prayer is said for the Dead.

6) **The Epistle.** (See picture, p. 102.)

After the Collects the priest, resting his hands on the missal, reads certain sections from the Holy Scriptures called the "Epistle." (In a Solemn High Mass the subdeacon chants the epistle aloud while standing at the foot of the altar on the epistle side, the priest reciting it quietly at the same time.) The epistle (also sometimes called Lessons) contains portions of the Bible from the Old or New Testament. The epistle (from the Latin word "epistola" or "letter") prepares our hearts to assist with devotion at Christ's Sacrifice. Like the introit and collect the epistle is different in nearly every Mass and refers either to the saint whose feast is being celebrated or to the special reason why the Mass is being offered. At the end of the epistle the altar boy, in the name of all, answers "Deo gratias:" "Thanks be to God" for having taught us His Word in the epistle. This expression was very common among the faithful in early times.

7) **The Gradual, Tract and Sequence.**

Thereupon the priest recites (in a High Mass the choir sings) several verses taken mostly from the Holy Bible or composed by the Church. They are generally quite short, although at times they are longer and have several Allelujas added to them. These verses change their form at different times of the year and, therefore, they are called by various names. Like the introit they announce

the reason why the Mass is being read, whether it be in honor of some saint, or some mystery of our holy religion, for the dead or some other reason. The common name for these verses is **"Gradual."** In times of joy and special solemnity several Allelujas (Praise the Lord) are added to the Gradual. In times of penance and sorrow these

Allelujas would be out of place. They are, therefore, omitted and several more verses are put in their stead. These added verses taken from the Psalms of the Old Testament are called the **"Tract."** On certain days the Church wishes to continue for a longer time the joy of the Alleluja or the sorrow and expression of penance in the

Tract. She does this by reciting a longer hymn or song called the **"Sequence."** There are five Sequences in our missal, one for each of the following feasts: Easter, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, the Feast of the Seven Sorrows of our Blessed Mother (Stabat mater) and one for Requiem Masses (Dies irae).

8) **The Gospel.** (See picture, p. 104.)

With folded hands the priest then goes to the center of the altar. Meanwhile the altar boy moves the book to the gospel side of the altar. Bowing down deeply the priest recites the prayer called the "Munda cor meum." In this prayer the priest begs God, who sent His angel to purify the lips of Isaias, the prophet, with a burning coal, to cleanse his lips, too, so that he may be worthy to announce the holy Gospel. Thereupon the priest goes to the gospel side of the altar and, standing before the missal with folded hands, recites (in a High Mass he sings) the greeting: "Dominus vobiscum," asking God to enter our hearts and with His grace to help us practice what the Gospel teaches. The people, through the altar boy, answer: "Et cum spiritu tuo." (In a Solemn High Mass the deacon sings the Gospel after the priest has recited it quietly. Lighted candles and burning incense are then used to make the reading of the Gospel more solemn). Making the sign of the cross with his thumb on the missal at the beginning of the Gospel and on his forehead, mouth and breast, the priest says (in a High Mass sings) the words "Initium or Sequentia sancti

Evangelii secundum Matthaeum, Marcum," etc., according as the Gospel is taken from the writings of the evangelist Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. The altar boy answers: "Gloria tibi Domine:" "Glory be to Thee, O Lord," for we certainly ought to praise God for the spiritual blessings contained in the holy Gospel. The **"Gospel"** is then read. It is chosen so as to fit in with the rest of the Mass prayers, that is to say, it expresses the purpose of the feast or gives the reason why the Mass is being celebrated. It is read while priest and people stand out of respect for God's Word. At the end of the Gospel the altar boy answers: "Laus tibi Christe:" "Praise be to Thee, Christ." The priest then kisses the gospel book reciting quietly at the same time the prayer "Per evangelica dicta," etc., to show his love and respect for Christ and His teaching and to beg His pardon for sin. On Sundays and Holydays of obligation after the Gospel the **sermon** is preached.

9) **The Credo.**

Returning to the center of the altar, on Sundays and certain feasts, the priest makes a public profession of faith called the **"Credo."** (It is called the Nicean Creed from a council of the Church held in the city of Nice in the year 325.) In a High Mass the priest sings the words "Credo in unum Deum:" "I believe in one God" and recites the rest while the choir sings it. In a High Mass the priest and people sit while the choir is singing the Creed. At the words: "Et incarnatus est," etc.,

that is to say, "the Son of God took flesh by the power of the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and became man," the priest and people bend the knees out of reverence for the Incaration of the Son of God. Formerly after the Creed (or the sermon) the deacon dismissed the Catechumens with the message: "Ite Missa est." With this ceremony the Mass of the Catechumens was finished. Then the first principal part of the Mass, namely, the Offertory, began.

Answer to Question I. **The principal prayers that are used as a preparation for the Mass from the beginning to the Offertory are: 1) the Prayers at the foot of the altar or the Confiteor; 2) the Introit; 3) the Kyrie eleison; 4) the Gloria in excelsis Deo; 5) the Collects or the Orations; 6) the Epistle; 7) the Gradual, Tract or the Sequence; 8) the Gospel; 9) the Credo.**

Question II. **Which are the principal prayers of the Mass from the Offertory to the Consecration?**

1) The Offertory Antiphon.

In the early days the public penitents and those who were not yet baptized had to leave the church after the Gospel or the sermon. The Mass, properly so called, began with the Offertory. It was customary for the faithful to offer bread and wine as well as other gifts for the support of the priests and the poor. These offerings were gathered and placed on the epistle side of the altar. (The collection which is taken up even now at the Offertory reminds us of this old custom.) While

these offerings were being gathered the choir would sing a certain number of verses, generally from the Psalms, which was kept up until all the gifts had been collected. These verses, which like the introit, gradual, etc., are different in nearly every Mass and give the reason why the Mass is being celebrated, have received the name "Offertory Antiphon."

After the Creed (or when it is omitted, immediately after the Gospel) the priest kissing the altar in the center faces the people and greets them by saying (in a High Mass singing) the "Dominus vobiscum." He asks God to be with all the people, for the more closely the great moment of Consecration approaches the greater is our need of God's help. The altar boy answers for the people in the words of the "Et cum spiritu tuo." Thereupon the priest invites all to join him in offering the Holy Sacrifice by the word: "Oremus": "Let us pray." Immediately after this "Oremus" the priest recites (in a High Mass the choir sings) the Offertory Antiphon.

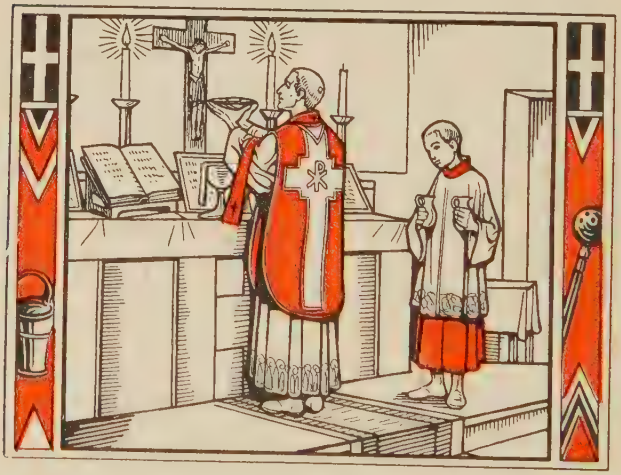
2) **The Prayers for the offering of the bread and wine.** (See picture, p. 110.)

Uncovering the chalice (in a Solemn High Mass the subdeacon brings the chalice covered with the humeral veil from the side table to the altar) the priest holds the paten with the altar bread before him over the altar and says the prayer "Suscipe sancte Pater," etc. In this prayer the priest asks God the Father to accept this immaculate host in satisfaction for his own sins and the sins of all who are present at Mass, as well as for all the

faithful living and dead. Making the sign of the cross with the paten and host over the corporal the priest lays the host on the corporal and conceals the paten partly under the corporal. (In a Solemn High Mass the subdeacon holds the paten covered by the humeral veil before him until after the Pater noster.) He then takes the chalice and goes to the epistle side of the altar to receive the wine and water for the sacrifice. While pouring a few drops of water into the chalice of wine the priest recites the prayer "Deus qui humanae," etc., asking God the Father to unite us closely to Christ just as the water is being united to the wine. Jesus Christ is our brother, because He has a body and a soul like ours; but in Holy Communion He is united even more closely to us by becoming our food and drink. The mixture of wine and water recalls to our minds, moreover, the blood and water which flowed from our Lord's side when hanging on the cross His Sacred Heart was pierced by a lance.

Returning of the center of the altar the priest offers the chalice of wine and water to God, saying at the same time the prayer "Offerimus," etc. We should all join with the priest, because he says: "We offer to Thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation begging that it may ascend to the Divine Majesty as a sweet odor for the saving of all the world." Then covering the chalice with the pall the priest rests his folded hands on the edge of the altar and recites the prayer "In spiritu," etc., which was said for the first time by the three young men, whom the king of Babylon had ordered to be

thrown into the fiery furnace, because they had refused to offer sacrifice to the false gods. In this prayer we offer ourselves, soul and body, to God Almighty together with the offerings of bread and wine. Making the sign of the cross with his right hand over the bread and wine the priest says the prayer "Veni Sanctificator," etc. to the Holy



Ghost, begging Him to change the bread and wine into Christ's most sacred Body and Blood by the miracle of Consecration.

(In a Solemn High Mass after this prayer the priest **incenses** the sacred offerings, the crucifix and the altar. The priest himself is then incensed. Finally the other ministers and the congregation

are incensed. While blessing the incense the priest recites the prayer "Per intercessionem," etc. calling upon the Lord through the intercession of St. Michael, the Archangel, to bless this incense and to receive it as an odor of sweetness. The sweet smelling incense tells us of the prayers of the faithful ascending to God's throne. While making three crosses with the censer over the offerings and surrounding them with three circles of incense, the priest says the prayer "Incensum istud," etc., asking that God's mercy descend upon us. He then incenses the altar while saying the prayer "Dirigatur Domine," etc., which king David recited while in the desert away from the temple where he was unable to offer sacrifice to God. In this prayer the priest asks God to purify his lips and heart, so that his prayer and that of the people may ascend to God's throne and bring down His grace upon us).

After the incensing (in a Low Mass after the prayer "Veni Sanctificator") the priest goes to the epistle side of the altar and washes his thumbs and index fingers saying at the same time the **"Lavabo** inter innocentes," etc. He performs this ceremony so that his fingers may be clean, for they are to touch the Sacred Species. At the same time he is reminded that his own heart ought to be pure from every sin. Returning to the center the priest recites the prayer "Suscipe Sancta Trinitas," etc., while resting his folded hands on the front edge of the altar. In this prayer he begs the Holy Trinity to receive the offerings of bread and wine, which are to be changed into Christ's Body and

Blood, in honor of Christ's Sufferings, Resurrection and Ascension, in honor of Blessed Mary ever Virgin, St. John the Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul and all the Saints. By thus honoring the saints we obtain their intercession and salvation through Jesus Christ. Then facing the people the priest says aloud: "Orate fratres" (the rest is recited quietly) inviting the people to join with him in prayer, so that his and their sacrifice may be pleasing to God. The altar boy, in the name of the people, answers by reciting the prayer "Suscipiat Dominus," etc., asking God to accept the sacrifice from the hands of the priest for the praise and glory of God's name, for their own benefit also and the good of the whole Church. The priest answers quietly "Amen," that is, "May your prayer be heard."

3) The Secreta or Secrets.

Holding is hands extended the priest recites in a quiet tone of voice a prayer or several prayers called the "Secreta." In every Mass there are as many secrets as there are collects. They are different in each Mass and generally contain the prayer that God may accept the offerings on the altar and forgive our sins. The entire secret (or secrets) is read quietly or in secret up to the last words of the last secret. This conclusion "Per omnia saecula saeculorum": "For ever and ever" is recited aloud (in a High Mass it is sung). The altar boy (in a High Mass the choir) answers "Amen."

4) The Preface.

The preface (from the Latin "praefatio," "a word of introduction,") is the immediate preparation or introduction to the most solemn part of the whole Mass, namely, the Canon. It is a beautiful hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God and was used from the earliest days of the Christian Church. Formerly there were many different prefaces used in the Mass, but a present there are fifteen forms in vogue in the Latin Church. On certain festdays the Church uses special prefaces, in order to thank God in a particular way for the grace which we commemorate that day in the Mass. Besides the common preface there are special prefaces for Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Christ's Ascension, Christ the King, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Holy Ghost, the Blessed Trinity, the Holy Cross, the Apostles, the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, and for the Dead.

As an introduction to the preface the priest greets the people as usual with the "Dominus vobiscum," to which the altar boy answers "Amen." We need God's special grace, so that we may be able to join in the hymn of praise with love and devotion. The priest does not turn again towards the people until after the Communion, because he has gone, as it were, into God's presence as did Moses on Mount Sinai and must, therefore, keep his attention fixed on God alone. He then recites (in a High Mass he sings) the words "Sursum corda": "Lift up your hearts," which are an invitation to the faithful to raise up

their hearts to the Almighty in devout prayers and to lay aside all distractions. The altar boy (or the choir) answers "Habemus ad Dominum": "We have raised them up." The priest exhorts the people to thank God for all His goodness by the words: "Gratias agamus," etc., to which the people through the altar boy (or the choir) respond "Dignum et justum est": "It is right and fitting to thank God." Thereupon the priest begins the **preface proper** by the words "Vere dignum et justum est," etc.: "It is indeed right and fitting and helpful to us to give thanks to God always and everywhere through our Lord Jesus Christ." The angels of heaven praise and adore God and we beg Him to allow us to join with the angels in raising our voices in praise of God's majesty. The special prefaces, mentioned above, insert some particular reason for thanking God according to the feast or season or the mystery which is being honored in the Mass of that day.

5) **The Sanctus and Benedictus.**

After the preface with head bowed and hands folded the priest recites (in a High Mass the choir sings) the hymn of praise to the Holy Trinity called the **"Sanctus":** "Holy, holy, holy Lord God," etc. and the **"Benedictus,"** etc.: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." (The choir sings the Benedictus after the Consecration.) The Benedictus is a prayer of praise to Christ, who is soon to come on the altar and whom we all should praise as the Jews did when He entered Jerusalem in triumph on Palm Sundy.

Immediately after the Benedictus **the Canon begins with the words "Te igitur."** Bowing down deeply and kissing the altar the priest recites the "Te igitur" etc. This prayer is addressed to God Almighty asking Him through His Son to bless these gifts of bread and wine, which are to become the unbloody Sacrifice of Christ's Body and Blood, especially for the Holy Catholic Church, for the pope, the bishop of the diocese and all the faithful Catholics throughout the whole world.

6) **The Memento for the Living.**

Then follows a special prayer for the living members of the Church and especially for those for whom the priest wishes to pray. This prayer is called the "Memento" from its first word. In this prayer the priest asks God to bless all who are assisting at Mass and all those, for whom the faithful present at Mass are praying. The Memento offered in the name of the Church has great power with God. The priest pauses a little while after the first words of the Memento to think of the persons for whom he wishes to pray in particular. Then extending his hands again he recites the prayer called the "Communicantes," in which he asks the saints of heaven, who are united closely with the faithful on earth through the Communion of Saints, to assist us in obtaining God's protection in all things. The saints specially mentioned by name are Blessed Mary, the twelve apostles (St. Paul is named instead of Judas) and twelve martyrs of the early Church, five of whom are popes, one a bishop, one a deacon and five laymen.

Extending his hands over the bread and wine with the palms turned downward the priest says the prayer "Hanc igitur," etc., begging God to accept the offering as a proof that we wish to adore Him as our Lord and God and asking Him to give us peace during this life and heaven for eternity. While reciting the prayer "Quam oblationem," etc., the priest makes five crosses with his right hand over the offerings and asks God to bless the gifts on the altar, so they may be changed into Christ's Body and Blood.

Answer to Question II. **The principal prayers of the Mass from the Offertory to the Consecration are: 1) the Offertory Antiphon; 2) the Prayers for the offering of the bread and wine; 3) the Secrets; 4) the Preface; 5) the Sanctus and the Benedictus and 6) the Memento for the Living.**

Question III. **Which are the principal prayers from the Consecration of the Mass to the Communion?**

1) The Sacred Words of Consecration.

While reciting the words of the prayer "Quam oblationem," etc., the priest makes five signs of the cross with his right hand over the bread and wine. Then rubbing his thumbs and index fingers on the corporal, he takes up the host from the corporal and holds it between the thumbs and index fingers of both hands saying the words: "Qui pridie," etc., which tell us about what Christ did in the Last Supper room where He offered the first Holy Mass. Taking bread into His sacred

and venerable hands and raising His eyes to heaven, to God, the Father Almighty, giving thanks, Christ blessed the bread, broke it and gave it to His disciples saying: "Take and eat ye all of this: For this is my Body." At these words Christ Himself, the great High Priest, becomes present under the form of bread and offers the Sacrifice of His Body to God. No wonder the priest bends his knee and all the faithful adore Christ with hearts filled with love as the priest **elevates the sacred Host!** (See picture, p. 118.)

Continuing the priest says the words "Simili modo," etc., which tell us more of the scene in the Supper room at Jerusalem. "In like manner after the Supper Christ took this glorious chalice into His sacred and venerable hands, thanking God again, blessing it, He gave it to His disciples saying: "Take and drink ye all of this: For this is the chalice of my Blood of the new and eternal testament (the mystery of Faith), which shall be shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins. As often as you do these things, you shall do them in commemoration of Me." At these sacred words of Consecration Christ Himself becomes present under the form of wine and offers His sacred Blood as a Sacrifice to His Father. Again the priest bends his knee to the earth and all the faithful adore their God hidden beneath the veils of the most Blessed Sacrament, as the priest **elevates the chalice** of the Precious Blood. The great Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ has been represented and renewed on the altar.

With hands extended, the thumbs and index fingers of which are kept joined until after the Communion, the priest recites the prayer: "Unde et memores," etc. The Sacrifice has already taken place at the Consecration, but now since thn Lamb of God is present on the altar, it is proper and helpful to the faithful to express more

in detail, by words and ceremonies, the offering of the Sacrifice and to beg God to grant them the graces which Christ earned for all by His Sacrifice. In the prayer "Unde et memores," therefore, the priest asks God to accept from his hands and the hands of the people the Sacrifice of Christ's Body and Blood really and truly present on the altar, especially in memory of the sacred Passion,

Resurrection and glorious Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. Towards the end of the prayer the priest makes five crosses with his right hand over the Sacred Species. Continuing he recites the prayer "Supra quae," etc., in which he begs God to look down with pleasure upon the Offering on the altar and to accept It graciously as He accepted the offering of Abel, Abraham and Melchisedech. Christ's Body and Blood are infinitely more pleasing to God than were all the sacrifices of the Old Law. This prayer does not, therefore, refer to the Sacrifice Itself of Christ's Body and Blood, but rather to the priest and people who are offering Christ's Sacrifice to God. They ask God to accept It from their hands with the same favor with which He received the sacrifices from the hands of Abel, Abraham and Melchisedech.

Bowing down deeply and resting his folded hands on the front edge of the altar the priest says the prayer: "Supplices te rogamus," etc. In this prayer he asks God to send an angel to carry our prayers and the offering we make of ourselves, body and soul, to heaven, so that all who receive Christ in Holy Communion may be filled with every heavenly blessing and grace through Christ our Lord. Towards the end of the prayer, after having kissed the altar in the center, the priest makes the sign of the cross over the Sacred Species and over himself.

2) **The Memento for the Dead.**

Opening his hands and joining them again the priest recites a special prayer called the "Me-

mento" for all the members of the Church who are suffering in Purgatory, so that their souls imprisoned there may be freed from the flames by the graces flowing from the Holy Sacrifice. The priest prays for certain souls in particular as well as for all Christians, who have preceded us into the other world marked by the sign of baptism and sleeping the sleep of peace. (See picture, p. 26.) How thankful we ought to be that we are members of Christ's Church, which never forgets us whether we be dead or alive! The Memento for the Dead reminds us all of the truth that we, too, must soon die. Consequently we pray God for grace that we may enter heaven and join the company of the saints. This prayer begins with the words "Nobis quoque peccatoribus": "To us sinners also," etc., the first words of which the priest recites aloud striking his breast at the same time, for we are all sinners relying on God's mercy to save us. In this prayer fifteen saints are mentioned (eight men and seven women), all of whom were honored in a special manner from the earliest days in the city of Rome. Only the names of martyrs are mentioned here, to show how powerful God's grace is, since it makes even weak men and women strong enough to sacrifice their lives out of love for Christ, through Whom we have received all things and through Whom God, the Father and Holy Ghost, receives honor and glory forever. Towards the end of the prayer the priest makes the sign of the cross five times, three times with the sacred Host over the chalice and twice

over the corporal. He then raises the Host and the chalice of Precious Blood somewhat over the corporal. The prayer ends with the words: *"Per omnia saecula saeculorum,"* which the priest recites aloud (in a High Mass he sings them) the altar boy (or the choir) answering: *"Amen."* **With these words the Canon of the Mass ends.**

3) **The Pater noster.** (See picture, p. 122.)

Before reciting (in a High Mass before singing) the "Pater noster": "Our Father," the priest says aloud (or sings in High Mass) a little introduction, which tells us that it was Christ who instructed us and commanded us to pray in the words of the Our Father. Therefore we dare to repeat this prayer and call God our Father. If ever there was a time when we ought to say the Lord's Prayer with devotion, surely it is when Christ Himself, who taught us this prayer, is present on the altar. The last petition "Sed libera nos a malo": But deliver us from evil," is recited by the altar boy (in a High Mass by the choir) in the name of the people. The priest answers quietly: "Amen."

Wiping the paten with the purificator and resting the edge of the paten, which he holds in his right hand, on the altar, the priest recites quietly the prayer: "Libera nos," etc. This prayer begs God to free us from all evil past, present and future and through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sts. Peter, Paul and Andrew and all the Saints, to give us peace, so that by God's help we may remain without sin and be

preserved from every disturbance. It ends with the words: "Per omnia saecula saeculorum," to which the altar boy (or the choir) answers "Amen."

The time for receiving Holy Communion is drawing nearer and one of the most necessary preparations for a worthy Communion is peace. Therefore the priest says aloud (in a High Mass he sings) the

words: "Pax Domini," etc.: "May the peace of the Lord be with you always," while making the sign of the cross with a little Particle of the sacred Host over the chalice. The altar boy responds (in a High Mass the choir sings): "Et cum spiritu tuo." Placing the little Particle into the chalice of the Precious Blood the priest recites the prayer:

"Haec commixtio," etc., begging God to give to all who receive Holy Communion eternal life.

4) **The Agnus Dei and other special Prayers for Holy Communion.**

Covering the chalice with the pall and genuflecting, the priest strikes his breast three times with his right hand while saying aloud (in a High Mass the choir sings) the **"Agnus Dei,"** etc. On the altar before the priest lies the innocent Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. The priest calls upon the Lamb of God twice to have mercy on all and once to give us peace. (In a Requiem Mass the priest begs the Lamb of God to grant eternal rest to the Dead). Resting his folded hands on the front edge of the altar and inclining somewhat the priest says quietly the three following (in a Requiem Mass only the last two) prayers as an immediate preparation for Holy Communion.

Looking at the Sacred Host the priest recites the prayer: **"Domine Jesu,"** etc., recalling that Jesus had said to His disciples that He would leave them His peace. He begs God not to look at his sins, but rather at the faith of the Church and to grant to His Church peace and unity. Surely the Church needs Christ's help against her many enemies.

[In a Solemn High Mass (except Requiem Masses) after the priest has recited this prayer he turns to the deacon, and, having placed his hands upon his shoulders, inclines his head slightly as if about to kiss him and says: **„Pax tecum":**

"Peace be with thee," to which the deacon responds: "Et cum spiritu tuo;" "And with thy spirit." The deacon gives the Pax to the sub-deacon and the latter passes it on to the other ministers of the altar. This pious ceremony is intended principally to remind us of Christ's tender love for His disciples and of the love that Christians

should have for one another particularly as a proper preparation for Holy Communion].

The second prayer: **"Domine Jesu,"** etc. is addressed directly to Jesus, the Son of the living God, who, according to the will of the Father through the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, by His death gives life to the world. The priest begs Christ by

His most sacred Body and Blood to keep him from all sin and from every evil, so that he may always remain united to God. In the third prayer: **"Perceptio corporis,"** etc., the priest humbly acknowledges that he is unworthy to receive the Body of the Lord and begs also for the grace to avoid forever the sin of an unworthy Communion and, through Christ's goodness, for help and safety of soul and body.

Genuflecting, he takes the Sacred Host between the thumb and index finger of the left hand, supporting the paten with the other fingers and bowing moderately, says: "Panem coelestem," etc.: "I shall receive this Heavenly Bread and call upon the Lord's name in praise." Thereupon he strikes his breast three times with his right hand saying: **"Domine non sum dignus,"** etc. "O Lord I am not worthy," etc., which the ruler of the synagogue of Capharnaum said to Christ when he begged Him to come and heal his sick servant. Making the sign of the cross with the Sacred Host the priest says: "Corpus Domini," etc., asking that the Body of Christ preserve his soul unto eternal life. He then consumes the Sacred Host. (See picture, p. 124.)

For a few moments the priest meditates or thinks about the great favor just granted him through Holy Communion. Then uncovering the chalice he gathers, by means of the paten, the little particles that may be lying on the corporal and places them in the chalice, reciting at the same time the prayer: "Quid retribuam," etc.: "What return shall I make to the Lord for all His goodness to me?" God is

pleased if only we appreciate His gifts to us and receive them with love and desire for His honor. Therefore stretching forth his hand the priest takes the chalice praising and trusting in God. This chalice is a power against his enemies. Making the sign of the cross with the chalice before him raised over the corporal, the priest says: "Sanguis Domini," etc., asking that the Blood of his Lord Jesus Christ preserve his soul unto eternal life. It is the same Blood that flowed from the Sacred Heart on the cross of Mount Calvary and can lead us to the unending joys of heaven. The priest consumes the Precious Blood. (Then Holy Communion is given to the people, who may wish to receive, so that they, too, may be united as closely as possible with Christ.)

While the altar boy is pouring wine into the chalice to purify it, the priest recites the prayer: "Quod ore," etc., asking God, the Father, to cleanse his heart more and more through the holy Sacrament of the Altar, so that this Sacrifice and Sacrament instituted for this short life may become for him a remedy unto eternal life. Going to the epistle side of the altar the priest receives wine and water into the chalice, at the same time purifying his thumbs and index fingers and reciting the prayer: "Corpus tuum," etc. This prayer begs God to remain in the heart of the priest always by the grace of the holy Sacrament and to wash away every stain. After having consumed the wine and water (called ablution), the priest wipes the chalice and covering it with the veil and burse arranges it in the center of the altar.

Answer to Question III. **The principal prayers of the Mass from the Consecration to the Communion are: 1) the Sacred Words of Consecration; 2) the Memento for the Dead; 3) the Pater noster; 4) the Agnus Dei and the other special Prayers for Holy Communion.**

Question IV. **Which are the principal prayers of the Mass from after the Communion to the end of the Mass?**

1) **The Communion Antiphon.**

After having covered the chalice (the altar boy meanwhile moves the missal from the gospel to the epistle side of the altar) the priest goes to the epistle side of the altar and reads aloud from the missal a short antiphon called the "Communion Antiphon." Formerly it was much longer and was sung while the people were receiving Holy Communion. It refers to the feast which is being celebrated or gives the purpose for which the Mass is being offered on that day. For example, in a Requiem Mass the communion antiphon begs God to let perpetual light shine upon the faithful departed. Like the introit, gradual and offertory antiphon the communion antiphon is different in nearly every Mass. In a High Mass the communion antiphon is sung by the choir immediately after the Agnus Dei.

2) **The Post-communion Prayers.**

Returning to the center the priest kisses the altar in the middle and facing the people greets

them with the words: "Dominus vobiscum," to which the altar boy in the name of the people answers: "Et cum spiritu tuo" (in a High Mass the choir sings the response). Then going again to the epistle side of the altar the priest reads (in a High Mass sings) a prayer (or prayers) called the "Post-communion." It is introduced by the "Oremus," an invitation to the faithful to join in

prayer with the priest and ends with the usual form "Per omnia saecula saeculorum": "For ever and ever," to which the altar boy or choir answers: "Amen." This prayer is read or sung by the priest with extended hands. The post-communion prayer, like the collects and secrets, is different in every Mass and agrees in number wit them. It reminds

the priest and people that they have received Holy Communion and at the same time begs of God special graces through the Holy Eucharist which was received as a Sacrament and offered as a Sacrifice during Holy Mass. In this prayer we also thank God for His goodness to us.

3) **The Ite Missa est.**

Returning to the center the priest kisses the altar in the middle and greets the people with the salutation: "Dominus vobiscum." The people, through the altar boy, respond in the usual way. This greeting contains the wish that the Lord may remain with priest and people not only during the Mass but throughout the day. After this Dominus vobiscum, in Masses in which the Gloria in excelsis Deo is said or sung, the priest says (in a High Mass sings) the words: "Ite Missa est." (In a Solemn High Mass the deacon facing the people sings the Ite Missa est.) This is an old custom that was in use from the earliest times by which the faithful were sent away after the Mass. These words are also a sign of joy and solemnity. Therefore in Masses, that are not of a joyous or festive character, but which denote sorrow or penance, instead of the Ite Missa est the priest recites or sings the words: **"Benedicamus Domino":** "Let us praise the Lord." On these days the faithful were accustomed to remain a while after the Mass and offer special prayers. The altar boy (in a High Mass the choir) answers: "Deo gratias:" "Thanks be to God," for surely we have every reason in the world for thanking God for the many graces

He has bestowed on us during Holy Mass. In Requiem Masses, instead of the Ite Missa est or the Benedicamus Domino, the priest makes use of the words: "Requiescant in pace": "May they rest in peace." This is a fitting close to the Mass for the Dead, for it contains the prayer that God may grant the peace of heaven to the souls of the faithful departed. The altar boy answers: "Amen," the wish that God may grant the prayer of the priest.

Resting his folded hands on the edge of the altar and inclined somewhat the priest recites quietly the prayer: "Placeat tibi," etc. to the Holy Trinity, asking God to accept the Holy Sacrifice from his hands as a proof that he and all the people acknowledge God as the Lord of all, beg His forgiveness and wish to satisfy Him for all sin through the merits of Christ our Lord. This prayer gives in a few words the reason why the Holy Mass has been offered to God.

4) **The Last Blessing.** (See picture, p. 128.)

Kissing the altar in the middle the priest asks the Holy Trinity to bless the people in the words: "Benedicat vos," etc., making at the same time the sign of the cross over them with his right hand. (In a Requiem Mass this ceremony is omitted.) This blessing of the priest has a special power, because it is performed in the name of the Church to whom Christ will refuse nothing. Moreover, since Holy Mass is a representation of Christ's life upon earth from His Birth to His Ascension, who is there that is not reminded, by this blessing, at

the end of the Mass, of the benediction which Christ gave to His Church from the Mount of Olivet before ascending into heaven? The altar boy in the name of the people answers: "Amen": "May God's blessing descend upon us."

5) The Last Gospel.

After the blessing the priest goes to the gospel side of the altar and greets the people in the usual manner with the "Dominus vobiscum." The faithful return the good wish in the words of the altar boy (or choir): "Et cum spiritu tuo." The priest then makes a small cross with his thumb upon the altar table (or gospel book if it is before him), upon his forehead, mouth and breast, reciting at the same time the words: "Sequentia (or Initium) sancti Evangelii secundum Matthaeum, Lucam," etc., according as the Gospel is taken from St. Matthew, Luke, etc. The Gospel is then read quietly. This makes a fitting close to the Mass. Usually the Last Gospel is taken from the beginning of the Gospel according to St. John, which tells us of Jesus Christ, true God, who became a man like unto us, was rejected by those whom He had come to save, but Who nevertheless gave to all who received Him every grace and blessing Many still refuse to believe in Him hidden beneath the veils of the Blessed Sacrament, but to all the faithful He gives graces abundant for time and eternity. At the words: "Et Verbum caro factum est": "And the Word was made flesh," the priest and people bend their knees out of reverence to the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God. (In

some Masses the Gospel of the day is recited instead of that of St. John. This is the case, for example, on a Sunday, which is also the feast of some saint. The Mass is said in honor of the saint with its own Gospel and at the end of the Mass the last Gospel is that of the Sunday which would have been read if there had been no special feast). In conclusion the altar boy answers "Deo Gratias": "Thanks be to God," for all the graces we have received through the unbloody Sacrifice of the Altar. The Mass is then ended.

Answer to Question IV. **The principal prayers of the Mass from after the Communion to the end of the Mass are: 1) the Communion Antiphon; 2) the Post-communion Prayers; 3) the Ite Missa est; 4) the Last Blessing and 5) the Last Gospel.**

After a Low Mass the priest kneeling at the foot of the altar recites three Hail Marys and certain prayers prescribed by our Holy Father, namely, "Hail! Holy Queen" in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary; "O God! our refuge" for the conversion of sinners and the liberty of Holy Church and "O Blessed Michael, the Archangel" for aid in battle against the devil. (An indulgence of 300 days is attached to the pious recitation of these prayers). The priest then retires to the sacristy.

PART IV.

THE CEREMONIES OF HOLY MASS.

The Catholic Church makes use of many beautiful prayers in Holy Mass to praise and thank God, to beg His pardon for sin and to move Him to bless in body and soul every Christian, living and dead. She invites all her children to join with her in offering prayer to God, especially during the Holy Sacrifice, for prayer is the soul of sacrifice. Holy Church seeks, moreover, to incite her children to piety during the Holy Sacrifice by various ceremonies or visible actions. **Prayer and ceremony go hand in hand;** in fact, they are so closely joined to each other, that it is impossible to understand the ceremony properly, unless one knows also the meaning of the prayer which is being recited while the ceremony is being performed. Just as a person naturally makes use of gestures (moves his hands, bows his head, etc.) while speaking, in order to show outwardly how he feels and thinks as well as to give more force to his words, so too, the priest uses various cere-

monies while reciting the prayers during Holy Mass.

Question I. **Why does Holy Church use ceremonies during the Mass?**

The prayers that the priest makes use of during the Mass are the speech, while the ceremonies are the gestures. Ceremonies teach us many lessons and move us to be devout during the Holy Sacrifice. For example, when we see the burning incense we are reminded of the duty of offering prayer to God. In times of sorrow and penance the Church omits the Gloria in excelsis Deo, the Ite Missa est, etc. During Lent, Advent, etc., the organ is silent and flowers are taken from the altar. Thus Holy Church helps us to be devout not only by the prayers but also by the ceremonies of divine worship.

Answer to Question I. **Holy Church uses ceremonies or certain visible actions during the Mass to teach us to be devout and to lift our hearts the more easily to God and holy things.**

There are many ceremonies that occur frequently in the Mass and generally have the same meaning whenever they are used. The following are the most common.

Question II. **What is the meaning of the ceremony 1) of bowing the head and 2) of inclining the shoulders?**

a) As a general rule the priest **bows his head slightly** as a sign of respect and reverence. For example, before leaving the sacristy and on re-

turning to it a bow is made to the crucifix; during the Gloria Patri, etc., and the Oremus, a bow is made towards the tabernacle; during certain phrases of the Gloria in excelsis Deo, the Credo, etc. In a High Mass the biretta is removed for the same reason. Whenever the sacred name of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin or of the saint whose feast is being celebrated occurs, this bow is also made.

b) During certain prayers the priests **keeps his head bowed moderately** to show that he does not trust in his own strength, but looks to God for aid. For instance, during the prayer Oramus te, etc., after ascending the altar for the first time; while reciting the Sanctus, the Agnus Dei, the Domine non sum dignus, etc., before Communion.

c) At certain other times **the bow is made profoundly** by inclining the head and shoulders to express humility and earnest prayer. Thus during the Confiteor at the foot of the altar; in the beginning of the prayer Te igitur, etc. of the Canon; during the Supplices te etc. after the Consecration.

Answer to Question II. **1) Bowing the head is a sign of respect and reverence or of mistrust in one's own strength; 2) inclining the shoulders is a sign of humility and earnest prayer according to the words of the prayer.**

Question III. **Why does the priest raise his eyes to the cross during Mass?**

Nine times during Holy Mass the priest raises his eyes to the cross on the altar to express the

lifting up of his heart and mind to God in prayer and to imitate the example of Christ, who raised His eyes to His Heavenly Father while praying or blessing objects.

Answer to Question III. **The priest raises his eyes to the cross during the Mass to show outwardly or by sign that he lifts his mind and heart to God in prayer and to imitate the example of Christ.**

Question IV. **What does the ceremony of kissing certain objects mean?**

Among the early Christians kissing was a common means of salutation, of showing reverence and love. In Holy Mass the priest kisses a) **the altar** as a mark of reverence and respect for Christ who is represented by the altar. Thus before turning to greet the people with the words Dominus vobiscum, the priest first kisses the altar in the center, in order by this act of love and union with Christ to obtain Christ's blessing for himself and the people. This ceremony is also a sign of respect for the relics of the martyrs inclosed in the altar stone.

b) The priest kisses other objects, as for example, **the missal, the paten,** etc., to express his reverence for these sacred objects. In a Solemn High Mass the deacon and subdeacon kiss **the celebrant's hand,** because he is the representative of Christ and his right hand is the symbol of power and blessing.

c) After the Agnus Dei in a Solemn High Mass the so-called **"Pax," "the kiss of peace,"** is given by the celebrant who places his two hands on the shoulders of the deacon, saying at the same time the words: "Pax tecum"; "Peace be with thee," the deacon answering "Et cum spiritu tuo": "And with thy spirit." The deacon does the same to the subdeacon. The subdeacon then gives the Pax to the other ministers of the altar. This ceremony takes the place of the kiss, which was formerly given to all the faithful present at Mass as a sign of brotherly love, for through baptism we are all made brothers in Christ.

Answer to Question IV. **The ceremony of kissing certain objects during the Mass is used as a sign of reverence, respect or brotherly love.**

Question V. **Why are different tones of voice used in the Mass?**

a) Some parts of the Mass are recited by the priest in **a loud tone of voice** as an invitation to the people to join with him in the prayers which he is offering to God. This loud tone of voice also expresses that the priest wishes to praise and glorify God in a special way; that is to say, it gives more force to the prayers than if they were read quietly. Thus the Introit, Kyrie, Gloria, Dominus vobiscum, Oremus, Collects, Epistle, Gospel, Preface, Postcommunions, etc. are recited in a loud tone. In a High Mass the priest **sings** some of these prayers, whereas in Solemn High Mass the other ministers of the altar and the

choir, too, join in the singing. This gives greater solemnity to the Mass and reminds all the faithful that they ought to take part in offering up the Sacrifice.

b) There are other parts of the Mass which the priest recites **secretly,** so that he alone can hear what is being said. Thus the entire Canon (except the words: "Nobis quoque peccatoribus" after the Consecration, which are recited in a clear voice to remind all that they are sinners) and the prayers called the Secrets after the Orate fratres are said quietly. This ceremony of quiet recitation reminds the faithful of the duty of being devout and recollected and also that the priest alone has the right to recite certain prayers as the representative of Christ.

Answers to Question V. **1) The priest uses a loud tone of voice in certain prayers of the Mass to invite the people to join him in the prayers and to give greater force and solemnity to what he says. 2) He recites other prayers quietly to remind the people to be recollected and to express that he is performing the act that belongs to the priest alone.**

Question VI. **Why does the priest rest his folded hands 1) on his breast and 2) on the front edge of the altar?**

a) By joining his hands and placing them **on his breast** the priest shows his devotion and recollection during prayer. The right thumb is placed over the left in the form of a cross, because the

cross is the sign of our salvation. b) By placing his folded hands **on the front edge of the altar** during certain prayers the priest expresses his entire dependence on Christ (represented by the altar) and his trust in Christ's help. For example, while reciting the Oramus te after having ascended the altar for the first time; during the prayer In spiritu humilitatis etc. after the offering of the chalice; during the first part of the prayer Te igitur, etc. at the beginning of the Canon; during the three prayers immediately before Holy Communion, etc.

Answer to Question VI. **The priest rests his folded hands 1) on his breast to show his devotion in prayer; 2) on the front edge of the altar to express his dependence on Christ and his trust in Him.**

Question VII. **What is the meaning of the ceremony of raising and holding the hands extended with the palms facing each other?**

This manner of praying with the arms outstretched in the form of a cross was quite common among the early Christians who thereby expressed their faith in Christ crucified. At present this form of the cross is not quite so plain, for the priest holds his hands extended and raised to the height of the shoulders with the palms facing each other. This ceremony is a sign of earnest prayer, for it is natural for one who is asking for help to stretch out his hands, in order to give more force to his prayer for aid. At the same time it helps

the priest the more easily to raise his mind to God. (After the Consecration the priest keeps his thumbs and index fingers of both hands joined, so that they may not touch anything except the Sacred Species).

Answer to Question VII. **The ceremony of raising and holding the hands extended with the palms facing each other is a sign of earnest prayer.**

Question VIII. **What is the meaning of the ceremony of extending and joining the hands?**

a) While reciting certain prayers the priest extends his hands and joins them immediately to show outwardly his feelings of joy or praise or to invite the people to join him in prayer, according to the words of the prayer. Thus when saying the Oremus, the Orate fratres, Dominus vobiscum, Gloria in excelsis Deo, Credo, Veni Sanctificator after the offering of the chalice, etc., the priest performs this ceremony, which has each time a different meaning according to the words that are used while the ceremony is being performed. b) After having held his hands extended during certain prayers the priest joins them again towards the end of the prayer, to express his earnest desire for help and his humility or mistrust in his own powers. For example at the close of the Collects, Secrets and Post-communions, while saying the words Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum, etc. or Qui tecum vivit et regnat, etc. the priest joins his hands.

Answer to Question VIII. **The ceremony of extending and joining the hands is an outward sign of joy, praise, special petition or invitation to join with the priest in prayer according to the words of the prayer.**

Question IX. **What does the ceremony of striking the breast mean?**

During certain prayers of the Mass the priest strikes his breast with his right hand to show outwardly that he is a sinner; that he repents or feels sorry for his sins and wishes to punish himself for his faults. For example, while reciting the words "mea culpa" three times during the Confiteor; the "nobis quoque peccatoribus" after the Consecration; during the Agnus Dei and Domine non sum dignus immediately before the Communion, etc.

Answer to Question IX. **The ceremony of striking the breast signifies that we are sinners and beg God's pardon.**

Question X. **What is the meaning of the ceremony of bending the knee?**

a) Genuflecting or bending the knee is a ceremony that occurs frequently during divine service. The priest and people bend **the right knee,** in order to show outwardly their feelings of adoration, reverence, penance or prayer according to the meaning of the words, which are recited while the ceremony is being performed. Upon arriving at the foot of the altar where the Blessed Sacrament in reserved in the Tabernacle; when passing before or upon leaving such an altar; at the words:

"Et incarnatus est" of the Credo; "Et Verbum caro factum est" of the last Gospel; before and after touching the Sacred Species etc. the priest bends the right knee to the ground.

b) During certain parts of the Mass priest and people bend **both knees.** This ceremony is a sign of double or greater adoration, reverence, penance or prayer. For example, this double genuflection is made when passing before the the Blessed Sacrament publicly exposed on the altar during the Forty Hours Adoration or the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament; also towards the end of the reading of the Passion during Holy Week, etc.

Answer to Question X. **1) Bending the right knee only is a sign of adoration reverence, penance or prayer; 2) bending both knees is a sign of greater or double adoration, etc. according to the words of the prayer.**

Question XI. **Why does the priest turn about and face the people during certain parts of the Mass?**

The priest turns around and faces the congregation while saying the Dominus vobiscum, the Orate fratres after the Offertory, the Ite Missa est, etc. to signify that he wishes the people to join with him in prayer as closely as possible during Holy Mass.

Answer to Question XI. **The priest turns about and faces the people during certain parts af the Mass as a sign that he invites them to join with him in prayer.**

Question XII. **What is the meaning of the ceremony of making the sign of the cross?**

The ceremony of making the sign of the cross is one of the most common of all the ceremonies that are used during Holy Mass and has many meanings. During the Canon of the Mass alone the cross is made twenty-five times over the offerings. In general, the sign of the cross reminds us that Christ redeemed the world through His bloody death on the cross, which is therefore the cause and source of all blessings. During certain prayers the sign of the cross is made twice, during others three or even five times, according to the words of the prayer. Thus, if the host alone is mentioned in the prayer, the sign of the cross is made once; if both host and chalice are mentioned, it is made twice; if three words are used to signify the oblations, three signs of the cross are made, one as each word is pronounced; for instance, at the beginning of the Canon the oblations are called "gifts," "presents" and "holy unspotted sacrifices." In the prayer immediately before the Pater noster the sign of the cross is made five times to suit the words of the prayer.

1) The sign of the cross is used as a symbol that ***teaches*** or tells us about various mysteries or truths of our holy religion.

a) The priest makes the large sign of the cross **on himself,** (blesses himself), with his right hand frequently during Holy Mass, to signify that we must begin and end all our actions and prayers in

the name of the Holy Trinity and that we must rely in all things upon the grace which Christ has earned for us by His death on the cross. Thus the priest signs himself in this way at the beginning of the Mass; during certain prayers at the foot of the altar; at the beginning of the introit (except in a Requiem Mass); at the end of the Gloria and the Credo; at the Benedictus before the Canon, etc.

b) The priest makes the sign of the cross with the thumb of the right hand **on the Missal** before the Gospel, to express that the whole Gospel is contained in the mystery of the cross. This same kind of cross is made by the priest and people **on their forehead, lips and breast** as a sign that they intend to carry the teaching of the holy cross of Christ always in their minds, to profess it with their lips and to keep it in their hearts. (In a Requiem Mass the priest makes with his right hand the sign of the cross at the Introit **over the Missal** instead of on himself, in order to express that the graces of the Holy Sacrifice are to benefit in a special way the souls of the faithful in purgatory).

c) Towards the end of the Mass (except in a Requiem Mass) the priest makes the sign of the cross with his right hand **over the people,** to remind them of the graces which they have received through the Sacrifice of the Cross which was offered anew in the Mass; 2) to tell them of the special blessing which Christ gave to His disciples before ascending into heaven after He

had completed His great Sacrifice of the Cross, and 3) to call down upon the faithful in the name of Holy Church God's blessing, so that they may be strengthened to live as true Christians.

d) After having offered up the host the priest makes the sign of the cross **with the paten and host** over the corporal and likewise after having offered the chalice he forms a cross **with the chalice of wine** over the corporal to show outwardly, by sign, that the same Body and Blood that were offered to God on the cross of Calvary are to be offered again on the altar during the Mass.

e) While standing on the epistle side of the altar the priest makes the sign of the cross with his right hand **over the cruet of water** before pouring the water into the chalice for the Offertory (except) at a Requiem Mass). The wine signifies Christ, who does not need to be blessed; the water represents the faithful who obtain all grace by their union with Christ. The cross made over the water, therefore, reminds us of the truth that through Christ's death on the cross all grace and blessing come to the faithful. (In a Requiem Mass this sign of the cross is omitted, for the Church wishes to express that the fruits of the Mass are to benefit the souls in Purgatory particularly and consequently all reference to the Christians living on earth is omitted as far as possible).

f) After the Pater noster the priest makes the sign of the cross **with the paten on himself** to show that he wishes (as the words of the prayer indicate) to obtain the peace which the Saviour brought into the world by the Cross and the Sacrifice of His

sacred Body which the priest then places on the paten.

g) In a Solemn High Mass the priest makes the sign of the cross three times **with the smoking censer** over the oblations of bread and wine after the Offertory, to signify that these offerings are blessed and belong to God through the Offertory. (The circle made three times with the smoking censer about the bread and wine tells us that they are surrounded by a circle of prayers).

h) Immediately before the Pater noster as a fitting close to the Canon the priest makes the sign of the cross **with the Sacred Host** three times over the chalice and twice over the corporal outside of the chalice. To understand this ceremony it is necessary to recall the words of the prayer which the priest recites while making the crosses. He forms three crosses with the Sacred Host over the chalice, because the words "Per ipsum," etc., ("through Him and with Him and in Him") refer to Christ, whose Sacred Blood is contained in the chalice. The priest makes the sign of the cross twice outside of the chalice, because the names of the Father and Holy Ghost are mentioned ("est tibi Deo Patri," etc.) and the chalice does not refer to them. This ceremony expresses at the same time that the highest honor, which is given to the Holy Trinity through and with and in Christ, comes from the bloody Sacrifice of the Cross renewed on the altar.

In general, when the sign of the cross is made **after the Consecration** over Christ's sacred Body

and Blood, it does not signify that God should bless them, because Christ's Body and Blood do not need any blessing. Therefore in the prayers after the Consecration when the cross is made over the Sacred Species, it is a picture, as it were, showing that the same Body and Blood, which were offered to God on the cross of Calvary, have been offered anew to God through the Consecration of the Mass.

2) The sign of the cross is used as a means of calling forth supernatural effects, that is to say, it is used to ***bless*** objects.

Thus towards the end of the Mass the priest makes the sign of the cross with his right hand over the people as a sign that he begs God to bless the faithful, that is, to give them special graces that they may be helped on their way to heaven.

In general, the priest forms the sign of the cross with is right hand over the oblations of bread and wine frequently during the prayers **before the Consecration** to show outwardly that he begs God to bless them, that is, to change them into Christ's Body and Blood. Thus, after the Offertory, during the prayer Veni Sanctificator, etc., the priest performs this ceremony to express that he asks the Holy Ghost to consecrate the bread and wine by the miracle of transubstantiation. At the same time the sign of the cross reminds us that the Lamb of God who died on the cross is to be offered to God through the Consecration of the Mass.

Answer to Question XII. **The ceremony of making the sign of the cross is used 1) to teach**

or to tell us of various mysteries or truths and 2) as a means of blessing objects.

Besides these ceremonies which are used repeatedly during the Mass, there are others which occur less often, but which nevertheless need explanation. They are the following.

Question XIII. **What is the meaning of the ceremony of raising up objects during the Mass?**

The priest holds up the **paten with the host** and **the chalice of wine** at the Offertory, while reciting the prayers, to express not merely by words but also by act that he offers these gifts to God. At the elevation **the sacred Body and Blood of Christ** are lifted up, so that the people may look at Christ in the Blessed Eucharist and bow down in adoration before Him. The elevation reminds us, moreover, that Christ hung on the cross between heaven and earth on Mount Calvary. Immediately before the Pater noster at the close of the Canon the priest, holding the Sacred Host between the thumb and index finger of the right hand over the chalice, raises the **Sacred Host and chalice** a little above the corporal. This ceremony explains in act what the priest says by the words of the prayer: "To Thee God, the Father Almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost is all honor and glory." At the introduction to the preface the priest raises **both hands** to the height of the shoulders while reciting the words "Sursum corda," "Lift up your hearts," to show by act what he says in word. (In a Solemn High Mass the subdeacon holds up **the paten** covered by the humeral veil before him

from after the Offertory until the end of the Pater noster. In other Masses where there is no subdeacon the paten during this part of the Mass lies covered partly by the corporal and partly by the purificator on the altar. This ceremony shows the reverence that we should have towards the sacred vessels of the altar by covering them from profane gaze as much as possible).

Answer to Question XIII. **The ceremony of raising up objects during Mass is used to show outwardly by act what the priest says by the words of the prayer.**

Question XIV. **What is the meaning of the ceremony of extending both hands over the oblations?**

While reciting the prayer Quam oblationem, etc. just before the Consecration, the priest holds his hands extended over the bread and the chalice of wine on the altar before him. He points by gesture, as it were, to the offerings on the altar. Moreover, in the Old Law the priest used to lay his hands on the animal to be slain as a sign, that he placed his sins and those of the people on the victim to be offered to God. So too, this ceremony in the Mass expresses that Christ took upon Himself our sins when He offered Himself on the cross for us and that He is about to repeat this same Sacrifice.

Answer to Question XIV. **The ceremony of extending the hands over the oblations of bread and wine tells us that Christ bore our sins by His Sacrifice.**

Question XV. **What is the meaning of the ceremony of washing the fingers?**

After the Offertory the priest goes to the epistle side of the altar and washes the index fingers and the thumbs of both hands out of reverence for the sacred Body and Blood of Christ, which he is to touch during the Mass. This ceremony also reminds the priest and the people that they ought to be free from all sin, if they wish to assist worthily at the Holy Sacrifice. After the Communion the priest again purifies his fingers with wine and water (the ablution) over the chalice.

Answer to Question XV. **The ceremony of washing the fingers reminds us of the duty of making our hearts pure from sin, so that we may assist worthily at Mass.**

Question XVI. **What is the meaning of the ceremony of breaking the Sacred Host over the chalice?**

Immediately before the Agnus Dei the priest, holding the Sacred Host over the chalice, breaks it into two halves, one of which he places on the paten. Then he breaks a little Particle from the lower end of the part that he holds between the thumb and index finger of the left hand. By this ceremony the priest imitates Christ's example at the Last Supper, when He blessed and broke and gave His Sacred Body to the disciples to eat. This ceremony reminds us of the bloody death of Christ on the cross, when His sacred Body was torn and bruised for our sakes. It is broken over the chalice to signify that His Precious Blood flowed from

His adorable Body and that both were offered to God as one Sacrifice.

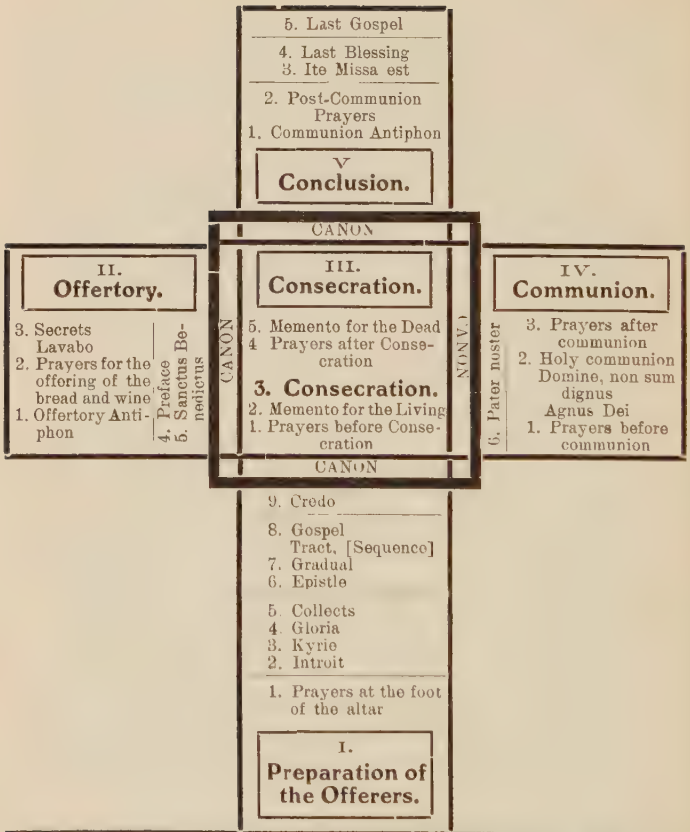
Answer to Question XVI. **The ceremony of beaking the Sacred Host over the chalice reminds us of Christ's bloody Death.**

Question XVII. **What is the meaning of the ceremony of mixing the Sacred Particle with the Precious Blood in the chalice?**

The priest forms three crosses over the chalice with the little Particle, which he broke from the large Host, while saying the words: "Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum": "May the peace of the Lord be always with you." This ceremony reminds us, that through Christ's bloody death on the cross has come true peace to all for time and eternity, while the words which are recited at the same time are a prayer to God to grant us this peace. Immediately after this ceremony the priest drops the little Particle into the chalice of the Sacred Blood saying at the same time the prayer: "Haec commixtio," etc. By thus uniting the Sacred Species of bread and wine the priest expresses outwardly that the Sacred Body of Christ has again been joined to the Precious Blood by the glorious Resurrection. Christ in the Eucharistic Sacrifice is the one undivided and living Lamb of God offered for the salvation of the world.

Answer to Question XVII. **The ceremony of mixing the sacred Particle with the Precious Blood in the chalice reminds us of Christ's glorious Resurrection after His bloody Death on the cross.**

(The End.)



Summary of the Prayers and Parts of the Mass

"The Sacrifice of the *Mass* is the Perpetuation of the Sacrifice of the *Cross.*"

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